SELECTED WRITINGS OF

E. T. A. Hoffmann

VOLUME 2

The Novel

SELECTED WRITINGS OF

E. T. A.

HOFFMANN

Edited and Translated by

Leonard J. Kent and Elizabeth C. Knight

Illustrated by Jacob Landau

The Novel

Volume

2

The University of Chicago Press
Chicago & London

Standard Book Number: 226–34788–3
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 73–88790

The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637
The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London

Translation © 1969 by The University of Chicago
Illustrations © 1969 by Jacob Landau

All rights reserved. Published 1969
Printed in the United States of America

DEDICATION BY ELIZABETH C. KNIGHT

TO THE HAPPY MEMORY OF

J. Stephen Knight

AND TO

Linda, Deborah, Stephen, and Richard

OUR CHILDREN

Contents

VOLUME 2

The Life and Opinions of Kater Murr, *Book One*

EDITOR'S PREFACE 5

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION 9

AUTHOR'S PREFACE (SUPPRESSED) 11

1. Existential Feelings: *Boyhood Months* 13
2. The Life and Experiences of the Youth: *I Too Was In Arcady* 90

The Life and Opinions of Kater Murr, *Book Two*

3. My Months of Apprenticeship: *The Caprices of Fortune* 183
4. The Salutary Results of Higher Culture: *The Maturer Months of Manhood* 287

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT 346

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF HOFFMANN'S LITERARY WORKS 348

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY 353

Illustrations

VOLUME 2

Meister Abraham	*frontispiece*	
Cat and Dog	*facing page*	56
Kreisler		87
Magister Legens		129
Chiara		145
I too was in Arcady		174
Prince Ignatius		219
Abraham and Lothario		245
The Court of Irenäus		321
The Monk Cyprianus		338

THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF

Kater Murr

With the fragmentary biography of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler on random sheets of scrap paper

Edited by

E. T. A. HOFFMANN

Book One

Editor's Preface

There is no book more in need of a preface than this one, for unless the strange way in which it was put together is explained, it might well seem to be a confused jumble.

The editor, therefore, begs the gentle reader really to read this preface.

The said editor has a friend, a bosom friend, whom he knows as well as himself. One day this friend spoke to him more or less as follows: "Since you have already had many books printed, my good friend, and understand publishers very well, it will be easy for you to find one of these gallant gentlemen who, on your recommendation, will print something written by a youthful author of dazzling talent and superior gifts. Assist this gentleman; he deserves it."

The editor promised to do his best for his literary colleague. It did seem a bit odd to him when his friend confessed that the manuscript came from a tomcat called Murr and contained his life and opinions. But his word had been given, and since the beginning of the narrative seemed well written, he rushed off at once with the manuscript in his pocket to Herr Dümmler,[1] Unter den Linden, and proposed the publication of the *Katerbuch*.[2]

Herr Dümmler said that he had certainly never had a tomcat among his authors before, that he also did not know that any of his

Hoffman, of course, is the "editor" responsible for this preface.

1. Ferdinand Dümmler, a contemporary Berlin publisher, who published the first edition of *Kater Murr* (Berlin, vol. 1, 1819; vol. 2, 1821).

2. Literally, "tomcat book," but by analogy with *Kateridee,* slang for a "crazy idea," a crazy book.

valued colleagues had ever had dealings with a man of that stamp, but that he was willing to give it a try.

The printing began, and the first proofs came to the editor's view. How alarmed he was when he noticed that Murr's story breaks off now and then and that strange interpolations occur which belong to another book containing the biography of Kapellmeister[3] Johannes Kreisler.

After careful investigation and inquiry, the editor finally learned the following. When Kater Murr wrote his life and opinions, he unceremoniously ripped up a printed book which he found at his master's and simply used the leaves, partly as an underpad, partly as blotting paper. These papers remained in the manuscript and, by mistake, were printed as if they belonged to it.

Ruefully and woefully, the editor must confess that this hodgepodge of heterogeneous material is the product of his own carelessness, since he should have scrupulously read the cat's manuscript before sending it to press. Meanwhile, some comfort exists for him.

First of all, the gentle reader will easily be able to orient himself if he will kindly pay careful attention to the abbreviations *s.p.* (scrap paper) and *M.c.* (Murr continues) in parentheses. Secondly, it is quite likely that the book Murr tore up would not have been published, so nobody knows anything at all about it. The Kapellmeister's friends, at least, will be pleased that the cat's literary vandalism provides them with some news about the strange life of that not unremarkable man.

The editor hopes for forgiveness.

Lastly, it is true that writers often owe their most inspired thoughts, their most extraordinary phrases, to their generous typesetters, who assist their flights of fancy with so-called typographical errors. For example, in the second part of his *Nachtstücke,*[4] page 326, the editor spoke of large shrubs which were in the garden. The compositor did not consider that sufficiently inspired and therefore transformed the little word *shrubs* into the little word *tubs.*[5] In the story "Mademoiselle de Scudéri,"[6] the compositor slyly let said

3. "Orchestra conductor." The German word is used throughout.
4. *Night Pieces,* a collection of eight tales first published in 1817.
5. German *Boskett,* "shrubbery," and *Kaskett,* "casket."
6. "Mademoiselle de Scudéri" first appeared in the *Taschenbuch für das Jahr 1820, der Liebe und Freundschaft gewidmet.* It was published in Berlin in the third volume of the *Serapionsbrüder* [*The Serapion Brethren*].

Mademoiselle appear in a black color of heavy silk instead of a black collar,[7] etc.

But to each his own! Neither Kater Murr nor Kapellmeister Kreisler's unknown biographer should deck himself in borrowed feathers, and the editor urgently begs the gentle reader to effect the following corrections before he reads this little work, so that he will think neither better nor worse of the two authors than they deserve.

Incidentally, only the major errors are listed; minor ones are left to the discretion of the gentle reader.[8]

In conclusion, the editor would like to affirm that he knew Kater Murr personally[9] and always found him to be a man with mild and pleasant manners. He has been strikingly portrayed on the cover of this book.[10]

Berlin, November 1819.

E. T. A. Hoffmann

7. German *Robe,* "dress," and *Farbe,* "color."

8. At this point in the text there is a notation that a list of typographical errors has been omitted.

9. See Hoffmann's letter to his friend Speyer, May 1, 1820: "Do pay attention to my literary efforts occasionally! I commend to you the most wise and intelligent Kater Murr, who, at this moment, is lying beside me on a little upholstered chair and who seems to have abandoned himself to the most extraordinary thoughts and fantasies, for he is purring vigorously! *A true tomcat,* whom I raised, of great beauty (he is strikingly portrayed on the cover of his book) and of great intelligence, the inspiration for the ludicrous joke that is woven into the book that is actually very serious."

10. The drawing by Hoffmann is reproduced in the edition by Hans von Müller (Leipzig, 1916) and in the ninth volume of the edition by Georg von Maassen (Munich, 1928).

Author's Introduction

Modestly—with a trembling heart—I offer the world a few pages of the life, the sorrows, the hopes, and the longings which, during sweet hours of leisure and poetic inspiration, flowed from my innermost being.

Will I, can I, survive criticism's severe tribunal? But it is for you, you sensitive souls, you pure, childlike spirits, you kindred, loyal souls, yes, it is for you I write; and a single, beautiful tear in your eyes will comfort me, will heal the wound slashed by the cold censure of insensitive reviewers.

Berlin, May (18—)

MURR
(Étudiant en belles lettres)

Author's Preface

(Suppressed)

With the certainty and calmness innate in the true genius, I submit my autobiography to the world, so that it may learn how one develops into an adult tomcat and can recognize the range of my outstanding qualities, can love me, value me, honor me, admire me, and worship me a little.

Should anyone be so bold as to wish to raise doubts about the genuine value of this extraordinary book, let him consider that he will have to deal with a tomcat who possesses spirit, intelligence, and sharp claws.

Berlin, May (18—)

MURR

(Homme de lettres très renommé)

P.S. This is too irritating! Even the author's preface, which was supposed to be suppressed, has been printed!—Nothing can be done except to beg the gentle reader not to condemn the literary tomcat too severely for the somewhat proud tone of his preface, and may he bear in mind that if many a sad preface by other sensitive authors were literally translated into their true sentiments, the result would not be very different.

H.

1

Existential Feelings

Boyhood Months

There is something beautiful, something splendid, something exalted about life! "O existence, you delightful habit!" cries out that Dutch hero in the tragedy.[1] And so do I, but not as that hero does in the painful moment when he must bid it farewell—no!—in that moment when the utter delight of that thought fills me and I have so gotten into that sweet habit that I am quite unwilling ever to abandon it. I am referring, namely, to the spiritual power, the unknown force, or whatever one wants to call the principle that reigns over us, which, having forced me into this habit, to some extent without my consent, cannot possibly have worse intentions with me than the friendly man whose service I have entered and who never snatches the fish he serves me from under my nose just when it tastes delicious.

O Nature! Sublime and holy Nature! How your raptures, your ecstasies fill my sympathetic breast! How your mysteriously murmuring breath surrounds me! The night is a bit chill and I intended —but no one who reads or does not read this can comprehend my rapture, for he does not know the heights to which I have soared, clambered would be more accurate, but no poet talks about his feet, even if he does have four of them as I do, but only about his wings, even if they do not grow on him but are only contrivances of

1. See Goethe, *Egmont*, V. When Egmont hears that he must die, he stamps his foot and shouts: "No rescue! Delightful existence! You lovely, friendly habit of existing and laboring; must I part from you?"

The cat's speech is often larded with accurate and inaccurate quotations. Murr is even accused of plagiarism by the editor (i.e., Hoffmann) on page 226. Murr is surely one of the great "quotation droppers."

a skillful mechanic. The wide, starry heaven arches above me; the full moon scatters its glittering rays; and roofs and towers surround me in a fiery radiance. The noisy turmoil below me in the streets dies away; the night becomes more and more silent—clouds drift by—a lone dove cooing a mournful love song flutters around the church steeple. Ah! If the dear little thing should come nearer to me? Something is stirring marvelously in me; a certain rapturous appetite is possessing me with irresistible power! Oh, if she would only come to my love-sick heart, that sweet goddess, I would embrace her, never let her go. Ha! she flutters into the dovecote (the deceitful bird) and leaves me on the roof, bereft of hope. How rare is true spiritual harmony in these barren, callous, loveless times.

Is walking upright on two legs so special that the race which calls itself man has the right to assume mastery over us who must walk on all fours to keep our balance? But I know men really pride themselves on something which supposedly dwells in their heads that they call reason. I have no true conception of what they mean by that, but so much is certain, that if, as I conclude from certain speeches of my master and patron, reason is nothing other than the capacity to act consciously and to do nothing idiotic, I would not change places with any man. I really believe that one adapts himself to consciousness; one does not even know how one acquires life or passes through life. At least it was so with me, and, I understand, not a single man on earth knows from his own experience the how and the where of his birth, only from tradition, which is often very uncertain. Cities quarrel about the birth of famous men, and as I myself know nothing accurate, it will always remain uncertain whether I saw the light of day in the cellar or in the attic or in the woodshed or, rather, did not see but was first seen in the world by my dear mama, for, as is peculiar to our kind, my eyes were veiled. I remember quite vaguely a certain growling which echoed around me and which I produce almost involuntarily when anger overpowers me. I remember more clearly and almost with full consciousness finding myself enclosed in a very narrow container with soft walls, scarcely able to draw breath and crying miserably in my fear and need. I felt that something reached down into the container and seized me roughly by my body, and this gave me the opportunity to become aware of and to exercise the first marvelous power with which nature has endowed me. I extended my sharp, pliant claws from my well-padded forepaws and dug them into the thing that

had seized me and which, as I later learned, could have been nothing other than a human hand. This hand pulled me out of the container and tossed me aside, and I immediately felt two violent blows on both sides of my face, where majestic whiskers, I may well say, now flourish. The hand, as I can now judge, injured by the muscular play of my paws, boxed my ears, and I experienced for the first time moral cause and effect, and a similar moral instinct persuaded me to draw in my claws just as quickly as I had extended them. Later, retracting my claws was recognized quite rightly as a sign of the greatest friendliness and graciousness and was designated by the phrase "velvet paws."

As I already mentioned, the hand tossed me onto the ground. Soon after, it picked me up again by the head and pressed it down so that my mouth was placed in a liquid, which—I do not know how it occurred to me, it must have been physical instinct—I began to lap and which aroused in me a feeling of strange inner comfort. It was, I now know, sweet milk that I enjoyed; I had been hungry and became sated by drinking. Thus my physical education followed my moral one.

Two hands picked me up again, but more gently than before, and placed me on a warm, soft bed. I felt better and better, and I began to express my inner happiness with those sounds that are peculiar to my kind and which are designated by the rather apt expression "purring." Thus my worldly education made giant strides. What an advantage, what a precious gift of heaven it is to be able to express physical happiness with sound and gesture! First I learned to growl, then I acquired the inimitable talent of twisting my tail in the most charming circles, and then I developed the wonderful gift of expressing with the one little word *meow* joy, sorrow, rapture and delight, fear and despair—in brief, all emotions and passions in all their most manifold degrees. What is the language of man in comparison to the simplest of all simple means of making oneself comprehensible! But more about the remarkable and instructive history of my eventful boyhood!

I awoke from a deep sleep; a blinding radiance, which frightened me, surrounded me; the veil was lifted from my eyes; I saw!

Before I could accustom my eyes to the light, and especially to the variety offered my vision, I had to sneeze repeatedly. Soon I was able to see quite well, as if I had been doing it for some time.

Seeing! It is a wonderful and splendid habit, a habit without

which it would be very difficult to manage at all in the world. How lucky are the greatly gifted who acquire seeing as easily as I did.

I cannot deny that I was somewhat frightened and uttered the same miserable cry that I had made in the narrow container. Immediately there appeared a thin, little old man, whom I shall never forget, for although I have a wide acquaintance, I have never seen anyone like him, or even similar. It frequently occurs among my kind that this or that person may have black-and-white spotted fur, but probably one rarely finds a man with snow-white hair and coal-black eyebrows, which was the case with my master. In the house the man wore a short, bright yellow dressing gown that frightened me; and so I crawled off the soft cushion as best I could in my helplessness. The man bent down to me with a gesture which seemed friendly and gave me confidence. He picked me up, and I was careful to keep my claws in as the concepts of claws and blows joined of themselves; and indeed, the man meant me well, for he placed me down in front of a saucer of sweet milk that I greedily lapped. This pleased him mightily. He said a great deal to me which, however, I did not understand, since I, a young, inexperienced boob of a kitten, had no understanding of human language. Actually, I know very little that I can relate about my patron. This much, however, is certain: he was skillful in many things and must have been practiced in scholarship and in the arts, for all the people who came to him (I noticed among them people who wore a star or a cross on that part of them where nature has given me a yellow spot, namely, on the breast) treated him exceptionally politely, even, at times, with a certain awed respect, and called him, as I later did the poodle Scaramouche, nothing other than "my most honorable, my dear and worthy Meister Abraham!" Only two people called him merely "my dear sir"; a tall, thin man in parrot-green trousers and white silk stockings; and a small, very plump woman with black hair and a lot of rings on all her fingers. That gentleman, however, was supposedly a Fürst;[2] the woman, on the other hand, a Jewish lady.

In spite of these genteel visitors, Meister Abraham lived way up high in a small room, so that I could conveniently go out the window for my first walks on the roof and in the attic.

It cannot be otherwise; I must have been born in an attic!

2. There is no precise English equivalent. "Sovereign Prince" is the closest.

What nonsense, the cellar or the woodshed—I vote for the attic! Climate, fatherland, manners, customs, how ineradicable is their impression; it is only they which mould the citizen's outer and inner form! What is the origin of this exalted mind, of this irresistible drive towards the sublime that is lodged in me? Where does this wonderfully rare skill in climbing come from or this enviable ability in making the most daring and superb leaps? Ha! a sweet sadness fills my breast! A longing for my native attic stirs violently in me! To you, my beloved fatherland, I dedicate these tears, these melancholy exultant meows! These leaps, these jumps honor you —in them are virtue and patriotic courage! You, oh attic, most lavishly bestow on me many a wee mouse; and in addition, one can snatch many a sausage, many a slab of bacon from the chimney, catch many a sparrow, and occasionally even ambush a little dove. "Mighty is the love of fatherland!"[3]

However, in considering—

(s.p.)[4] " '—and don't you remember, Your Grace, the great storm which blew the lawyer's hat off his head into the Seine as he was crossing the Pont-Neuf one night? There is something similar in Rabelais,[5] but it was not actually the storm that stole the lawyer's hat, which he was holding firmly on his head while he abandoned his coat to the wind, but a grenadier running by who shouted, "A big wind is blowing, sir!" quickly knocking the lawyer's fine beaver hat off his wig, and it was not this beaver hat which was hurled into the waves of the Seine, but the soldier's own mean felt hat which the gale really blew to a watery death. You must know, Your Grace, that while the lawyer was standing there baffled, a second soldier rushing past with the same cry, "A big wind is blowing, sir!" seized the lawyer's cloak by the collar and tore it off his shoulders, and immediately thereafter a third soldier rushing past with the same

3. Friedrich Wilhelm Cotter (1746–1797), *Die Geisterinsel* [Island of the spirits], an operetta adapted from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The quotation is from the finale of act III.

4. The sections that tell the story of Kreisler all begin with *(s.p.)*, an abbreviation for *scrap paper*. See Hoffmann's explanation in his preface.

5. As Georg Ellinger (a major editor of Hoffmann to whom all subsequent editors are greatly indebted) has pointed out, the following is freely retold from Lawrence Sterne's "The Fragment: Paris," in *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*, where Sterne has Yorick claim that "The Fragment: Paris," which came to him by chance, was written on scrap paper in Old French and may have been written by Rabelais.

cry, "A big wind is blowing, sir!" wrested the Spanish cane with the golden knob from his hands. The lawyer screamed with all his might, threw his wig at the last rascal and then went away bareheaded and without his cloak and cane to receive the strangest of all wills and to hear the strangest of all adventures. You know all that, Your Grace.'

" 'I know nothing,' the Fürst replied when I stopped. 'I know nothing at all and I do not understand how you, Meister Abraham, can babble such utter nonsense. Of course I know the Pont-Neuf; it is in Paris, and if I have never walked across it, I have frequently driven across it as is befitting my rank. I have never seen the lawyer Rabelais and have never in my whole life paid any attention to soldiers' pranks. When I was younger and still commanded my army, I had all the officers whipped once a week for the idiocies they had committed or would commit in the future, but lashing the common men was the business of the lieutenants who, following my example, attended to it every week on Saturday, so that on Sunday there were no officers and no common soldiers in the whole army who had not received a sound thrashing, as a result of which, in addition to having a beaten-in morality, the troops became so accustomed to being beaten without ever having faced an enemy, that they could do nothing in this case but beat. You can see that, Meister Abraham; and now tell me, for heaven's sake, what you mean by the storm and your lawyer Rabelais who was robbed on the Pont-Neuf? Where is your excuse for the festival breaking up in wild confusion, for a star shell landing on my wig, for my beloved son falling into the fountain and being splashed by traitorous dolphins, for the princess, without her mask and with her skirts above her knees, racing through the park like Atalanta, for—for—who can count all the misfortunes of that fateful night! Well, Meister Abraham, what do you say?'

" 'Your Grace,' I replied, bowing humbly, 'the cause of all those disasters was nothing but the gale—that dreadful storm that erupted when everything was going its smoothest. Can I command the elements? Did I not suffer a serious misfortune? Did I not lose my hat, coat, and cloak just like that lawyer, whom I beg you most respectfully not to confuse with that famous French writer, Rabelais? Did I not—' "

"Listen," Johannes Kreisler interrupted Meister Abraham,

"listen, my friend. Although the Fürstin's[6] birthday, the celebration of which you arranged, occurred some time ago, it is still spoken of as if it were a dark secret; and you certainly initiated many of the fantastic occurrences, as is your wont. The people always did consider you a kind of sorcerer, and this belief was strengthened considerably by that festival. Just tell me straight-out what happened. You know I was not here at the time."

"Just because you were not here," Meister Abraham interrupted his friend, "just because you were not here, because you had run away like a madman, driven by heaven knows what hellish furies, I became wildly crazy; just because of all that, I invoked the elements to upset a festival that was lacerating my heart, since you, the true hero of the piece, were missing; a festival, that at first dragged slowly and dully and then brought nothing but the torment of frightening dreams—pain—horror to beloved people. You know, Johannes, that I have looked deep into your heart and have recognized the dangerous—threatening secret that lives there, a seething volcano, capable at any moment of erupting with destructive fire, consuming all mercilessly. There are things within us that shape themselves in such a way that not even the most intimate friends may discuss them. Therefore, I very carefully concealed from you what I had observed in you, but I intended to grasp your ego violently with that festival, the deeper meaning of which concerned not the Fürstin but another beloved person and you yourself. Your most hidden anguish was to have become alive, and the Furies, as if aroused from sleep, were to have lacerated your heart with doubled force. The medicine taken from hell itself, which no wise doctor can shrink from prescribing for the most severe paroxysms, was to kill or cure you who were like a mortally ill man. Remember, Johannes, that the Fürstin's nameday coincides with Julia's, since she too is named Maria."

"Ha!" cried Johannes leaping up, a hectic fire in his eye, "Ha! Meister! Have you been given the power to play an impertinent, mocking game with me? Are you Fate itself that you can grasp my inner being?"

"Wild and reckless man," replied Meister Abraham calmly, "when will the hectic fire in your heart become a pure white flame,

6. The feminine form of Fürst.

nourished by a truly deep understanding of art, of everything wonderful and beautiful that dwells in you! You demand of me a description of that fateful festival; then listen calmly, or if your strength is so completely broken that you are unable to, I intend to leave you."

"Tell me," Kreisler spoke in a half-strangled voice, sitting down again, his hands covering his face.

"I do not intend," said Meister Abraham, suddenly adopting a cheerful tone, "I do not intend to exhaust you, dear Johannes, with a description of all the ingenious arrangements which owed their origin chiefly to the Fürst's inventive mind. Since the festival itself began late in the evening, it goes without saying that the whole lovely park that surrounds the palace was illuminated. I had worked hard to produce unusual lighting effects but was only partially successful because, at the Fürst's express command, the Fürstin's initials with the royal crown above were to appear in colored lamps on large black planks that were set up for this purpose along all the paths. Since these boards were nailed to tall poles, they resembled the illuminated warning signs that forbid smoking or bypassing tolls. The center of the festival was the theater, constructed in the middle of the park from the shrubbery and the artistic ruins. In this theater, actors from the city were to present something allegorical, which was silly enough to please enormously, even though the Fürst had written it himself and even though it had, therefore—to use the witty expression of the producer of the royal piece—flowed from a serene pen. The path from the palace to the theater was quite long. It was the Fürst's poetic notion that a guardian angel hovering in the air should light the way for the royal family with two torches and that there should be no other light and that not until the royal family and entourage had taken their places would the theater be suddenly lighted. The path, therefore, would be dark. In vain I pointed out how difficult the distance made such machinery; the Fürst had read about something similar in the *Fêtes de Versailles,*[7] and since he himself had conceived the poetical idea, he insisted on its execution. To avoid any undeserved criticism, I handed over the guardian angel and the two torches to the theater mechanic from the city.

7. According to Ellinger, probably the *Plaisirs de l'isle enchantée* (Paris, 1664), ascribed to Molière and later appearing with the title *Les Festes de Versailles.*

As soon as the royal couple, followed by their attendants, came out of the palace door, a little chubby-faced creature clothed in the Fürst's livery, with two burning torches in his little hands, was let down by wires from the roof of the palace. But the puppet was too heavy, and after some twenty paces the machinery broke down, leaving the royal household's shining guardian angel dangling; and when the workmen pulled harder, he flipped over. Then the inverted burning torches hurled glowing drops on the earth. The first of these drops hit the Fürst himself, who gritted his teeth with stoical equanimity but abandoned his solemn stride and hastened on more quickly. The guardian angel was now hovering over the group, which was composed of the Court Chamberlain, the gentlemen-in-waiting, and other courtiers, with his feet up and his head down, so that the rain of fire from the torches landed on their heads and noses. It would have violated etiquette to utter cries of pain and disturb the festival, and it was delightful to watch these wretched people, a whole cohort of stoical *Scaevolas*,[8] with their horribly distorted faces, controlling their pain with all their might, even forcing a smile that seemed to belong to Hades, while striding silently along, uttering only feeble moans. At the same time, drums rolled, trumpets blared, a hundred voices shouted, 'Long live the Fürstin! Long live the Fürst!' so that the tragic pathos born of the strange contrast between the Laocoönic faces and the general rejoicing lent the scene an unimaginable majesty.

"The plump old Court Chamberlain could endure it no longer. When a burning drop hit him right on the cheek, he leaped sideways in angry desperation, became entangled, however, in the wires that belonged to the guardian angel and ran along the ground on that side, and fell to the ground, shouting 'Damn!' That was the end of the flying page's role. The Court Chamberlain's excessive weight pulled him down; he crashed onto the courtiers who scattered shrieking. The torches went out, leaving everyone in the pitch dark. All this took place right by the theater. I took good care not to light the tinder that would illuminate the lamps and the braziers all at the same moment, but waited a few minutes to give everyone time to get properly entangled among the trees and

8. Caius Mucius, a mythological hero, tried to murder Lars Porsena who was besieging Rome. He was condemned to be burned; but when he put his right hand in the fire and held it there without flinching, he was freed. After that he was called Scaevola, or "left-hand."

in the shrubbery. 'Lights—lights,' shouted the Fürst like the King in *Hamlet*.[9] 'Lights—lights' echoed a multitude of voices in confusion. When the place was lighted, the scattered mob resembled a defeated army that regroups itself with difficulty. The Court Chamberlain revealed himself as a man with presence of mind, as the most skillful tactician of his age; for in a few minutes, thanks to his efforts, order was restored. The Fürst and Fürstin mounted with the courtiers nearest them a kind of raised throne of flowers that had been erected in the middle of the audience. As soon as the royal couple had seated themselves, a mass of flowers was showered onto them by means of an ingenious device of the machinist. Now a dark fate ordained that a large scarlet lily hit the Fürst on the nose and covered his whole face with a brilliant red powder so that he acquired an uncommonly majestic appearance worthy of the solemnity of the festival."

"That is too ridiculous—too ridiculous!" Kreisler burst out in a fit of laughter so hysterical that the walls resounded.

"Do not laugh so convulsively," said Meister Abraham. "I too laughed that evening more unrestrainedly than ever before; I felt inclined to all kinds of crazy mischief, and like the imp Puck wanted to increase the confusion still more; but the arrows I had aimed at others only penetrated the deeper into my own breast. Now—I must tell you this—I had chosen the moment of the silly shower of flowers to knot the invisible thread which was to run through the entire festival and, like an electric conductor, was to spark those people who I believed were in rapport with me by means of my mysterious spiritual apparatus in which the thread ended. Do not interrupt me, Johannes—listen to me quietly. Julia was sitting with the Princess behind the Fürstin and to the side. I had them both in view. As soon as the drums and trumpets ceased, a budding rose hidden among fragrant violets fell in her lap, and like a breath of night wind, the sound of your song *Mi lagnero tacendo della mia sorte amara*,[10] penetrating deep into the heart, drifted through the air. Julia was frightened, but when the song began—let me reassure you that you do not have to be in fearful doubt about the quality of the performance, which was played from afar by our four outstanding tenor clarinetists—a faint 'Oh'

9. III, ii, 252–53: "Give me some light: away!"

10. Hoffmann's aria, now lost, but according to his diary composed July 3, 1812. "I will bewail my bitter fate in silence."

escaped her lips, she pressed the bouquet to her breast, and I clearly heard her say to the Princess, 'He is surely here again.' The Princess embraced Julia violently and cried, 'No, no—never!' so loudly that the Fürst turned his fiery face and threw her an angry 'Silence!' The gentleman was probably not really angry with the dear child, but I must tell you that the strange rouge which an operatic *tiranno ingrato*[11] could not have applied to better purpose, really gave him the appearance of having a perpetual, implacable anger, so that the most touching speeches and the most tender scenes which allegorically represented domestic bliss on the throne seemed quite incongruous. The actors and the audience were not a little embarrassed by this. Even in those places where, following the directions marked in red in the script in his hand, the Fürst kissed the Fürstin's hand and wiped a tear from his eye with his handkerchief, he seemed to be doing it with a dogged anger, so that the gentlemen-in-waiting who were standing dutifully at his side whispered to each other, 'Good Lord, what is the matter with His Grace!' I must tell you, Johannes, that while the actors were performing the idiotic nonsense up front on the stage, I was in back producing with my magic mirror and other contrivances a spirit drama in the air for the glorification of the divine child, the charming Julia; thus one inspired melody after the other which you had composed resounded and, now from afar, now from nearby, like the fearful, ominous call of some spirit, the name Julia echoed. But you were not there—you were not there, my Johannes! And when, after the play was over, I too had to praise my Ariel as Shakespeare's Prospero his, even if I had to say he had carried out everything excellently, I still found that what I had thought to have arranged with deep meaning was pale and flat. Julia had understood everything with fine tact; but she seemed to be aroused only as by a lovely dream, which one allows to have little real effect on one's actual life. The Princess, on the other hand, was lost in thought. Arm in arm she wandered with Julia along the lighted paths of the park, while the court was partaking of refreshments in a pavilion. I had prepared the chief event for this moment, but you were not there—you were not there, my Johannes. Full of irritation and anger, I ran around; I went to see if all the arrangements for the great fireworks display that was to close the festival were in order. Then, glancing at the sky, I noticed a little reddish storm cloud

11. "Unpleasant tyrant."

above the Geierstein shimmering in the night sky, which always means a storm that builds up quietly and then bursts upon us with a fearful explosion. I can estimate, as you know, the time the explosion will occur from the appearance of the cloud. That could not have been more than an hour away. I decided, therefore, to speed up the fireworks. At that moment I heard that my Ariel had begun the phantasmagoria which was to determine everything, everything, for I heard the choir singing your *Ave Maria stella*[12] at the end of the park in the little Mary Chapel. I quickly hurried over there. Julia and the Princess were kneeling on a prie-dieu which had been brought outside in front of the chapel. I had scarcely arrived there when—but you were missing—you were missing, my Johannes! Let me pass over in silence what happened then. Ah, what I had considered a masterpiece of my art was without effect, and I learned what I, stupid fool, had not suspected."

"Out with it!" cried Kreisler. "Tell me everything, everything, Meister, as it happened."

"By no means," replied Meister Abraham. "It will not help you, Johannes, and it lacerates my heart to tell you how my own ghosts filled me with fright and horror! The cloud! Happy thought! 'All shall end in mad confusion,' I cried out wildly and raced over to the place for the fireworks display. The Fürst sent word that I should give a sign when all was ready. Not turning my eye from the cloud which was mounting higher and higher above the Geierstein, when it seemed high enough I had the small cannon fired. Soon the court, the whole company, was assembled. After the usual display of Catherine wheels, rockets, starshells and other ordinary fireworks, the Fürstin's initials exploded in a brilliant flare of Chinese fire, but high above them in the sky the name Julia drifted by and faded away in the milk-white light. Now was the moment. I lighted the girandole, and as the rockets shot into the sky, hissing and crackling, the storm burst upon us with flaming lightning, with crashing thunder resounding through forest and mountain. A hurricane roared into the park and stirred up misery howling with a thousand voices in the shrubbery. I snatched a trumpet from a fleeing musician's hand and blew triumphantly while the artillery salvos of the fireworks and the small cannon gallantly competed with the thunder."

12. Composition for four voices by Hoffmann, 1808.

While Meister Abraham was relating this, Kreisler jumped up, paced violently back and forth in the room, waved his arms about in all directions, and finally called enthusiastically, "Marvelous! Terrific! That is my Meister Abraham, with whom I am one in heart and soul!"

"Oh," said Meister Abraham, "I know the wildest and most gruesome things are just what you like, and yet I have forgotten to tell you of that which would have delivered you up to the mysterious forces of the spirit world. I had had the weather harp tightened, which, as you know, is stretched above the large fountain; and the storm, like an accomplished musician, played lustily on it as on a giant harmonica. The chords of this huge organ resounded fearfully through the raging and howling of the hurricane. The powerful tones beat faster and faster, and one might have been listening to a ballet of the Furies in an unusually grand style such as would never be heard within a stage's canvas walls. Well—in half an hour all was over. The moon came out from behind the clouds; the night wind murmured consolingly in the frightened forest and dried the tears on the dark bushes. From time to time the weather harp jingled like a somber, distant bell. I felt very strange. I was so imbued with your presence, Johannes, that I believed you would materialize before me from out the grave of lost hopes and unrealized dreams and sink on my breast. In the stillness of the night the realization of the kind of game I had played, of my desire to break the knot tied by a dark fate, welled up in me in a strange shape, and a cold shudder agitated me, for it was myself whom I had to fear. A swarm of lightning bugs danced and skipped around in the park, but they were only servants with lanterns who were gathering up the lost hats, wigs, scarves, daggers, shoes, and shawls that had been dropped in the sudden flight. I left.

"I paused in the middle of the big bridge by our city and once again looked back at the park which stood in the glow of the moon like an enchanted garden in which the merry games of nimble elves had begun. Then a squeaking and whimpering that sounded almost like a newborn baby came to my ears. I feared some crime, leaned way over the railing, and saw, in the bright moonlight, a tiny kitten clinging with great effort to a post. Someone had probably tried to drown a litter of kittens, and the little animal had crawled up it. Well, I thought, even if it is not a baby, it is

still a poor beast that has squeaked at you to rescue it, and you must do so."

"Oh you sentimental Just,"[13] laughed Kreisler. "Tell me, where is your Tellheim?"

"Pardon me," Meister Abraham continued, "pardon me, my Johannes, you can scarcely compare me to Just. I have outjusted Just. He rescued a poodle, an animal everyone likes to have around, one which can even be expected to perform small services such as retrieving, carrying gloves, tobacco pouches, and pipes, etc.; but I rescued a tomcat, an animal that many fear, that is generally accused of being perfidious, not possessed of a gentle, benevolent nature, incapable of any sincere friendship, and that never completely abandons a hostile attitude towards mankind. Yes, I rescued a tomcat out of pure, unselfish humanity. I climbed over the railing, reached down precariously, grasped the whimpering kitten, pulled it up, and stuck it in my pocket. Having reached home, I undressed quickly and threw myself onto my bed exhausted. But I had scarcely fallen asleep when a miserable mewing and whimpering that seemed to be coming from my wardrobe woke me up. I had forgotten the kitten and had left it in my coat pocket. I freed the kitten from its prison, for which it scratched me so violently that all my fingers bled. I was about to throw the cat out the window, but then I reflected and was ashamed of my small-mindedness, of my vindictiveness which is not even appropriate towards men, far less towards dumb animals. At any rate, I raised the cat with great care and effort. It is the smartest, cutest, funniest animal of its kind there is; it only needs the higher education that you, my dear Johannes, can easily give it. Therefore, I have decided to let you have the tomcat Murr, as I have named him. Although Murr at the moment is no *homo sui juris*,[14] as the lawyers say, nevertheless, I have asked him whether he is willing to enter your service. He is most satisfied to do so."

"You are babbling," said Kreisler. "You are babbling, Meister Abraham! You know that I do not especially like cats, that I much prefer the race of dogs."

"I beg you," replied Meister Abraham, "I beg you, dear Johannes, from the bottom of my heart, to take my promising

13. See Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm*, I, viii. A similar tale about rescuing a poodle is told by Just, Tellheim's servant in the play.

14. "A man who is his own master."

Kater Murr, at least until I return from my journey. I have brought him with me; he is outside and awaits a favorable decision. At least look at him."

With that Meister Abraham opened the door and there, curled up asleep on the doormat, lay a tomcat that really could be called a marvel of beauty in its own way. The grey and black stripes on its back met on its head between the ears, forming very decorative hieroglyphics on its forehead. Its majestic tail was similarly striped and of quite unusual length and power. The cat's bright fur gleamed in the sunlight, revealing narrow, golden yellow stripes between the black and the grey. "Murr! Murr!" called Meister Abraham. "Prrr—prr," replied the cat very distinctly, stretched, got up, arched its back in a quite extraordinary way, and opened a pair of grass-green eyes in which soul and intelligence glittered. At least that is what Meister Abraham claimed, and even Kreisler had to admit that there was something special and unusual in the cat's expression, that its head was large enough to contain learning, and that its whiskers even in its youth were long enough to lend it the authority of a Greek philosopher.

"How can you fall asleep so readily?" Meister Abraham said to the cat. "You will lose all zest and become prematurely a gloomy cat. Wash yourself well, Murr."

The cat at once sat on its haunches, washed its forehead and cheeks elegantly with his velvety paws, and uttered a clear, cheerful meow.

"This," continued Meister Abraham, "this is Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler, whose service you will enter." The cat stared at Kreisler with its large, sparkling eyes, began to purr, jumped on the table which stood near Kreisler and from there without further ado onto his shoulder as if it wished to whisper something in his ear. Then it jumped down to the ground again, circled its new master, rubbing against him and purring, as if it were making his acquaintance.

"God forgive me," Kreisler cried, "I think the little grey fellow is possessed of reason and is a descendant of the illustrious family of Puss-in-Boots!"[15]

15. See Ludwig Tieck's *Der gestiefelte Kater* (1797), a satirical play based on the fairy-tale of the same name, *Puss-in-Boots,* from *Contes de ma Mère l'Oie* by Charles Perrault (1696), which appeared in German in volume one of the *Blaue Bibliothek aller Nationen* (Gotha, 1790), a favorite of Hoffmann's.

"At least it is evident," replied Meister Abraham, "that Kater Murr is the wittiest animal in the world, a true Pulcinella,[16] and at the same time polite and well behaved, not forward and immodest as dogs sometimes are which are a nuisance with their clumsy caresses."

"Observing this clever cat," said Kreisler, "I realize with great sorrow how limited our perception is. Who can say, who can even surmise the extent of the intellectual capacity of animals. When we are unable to fathom something, or rather everything, in nature, we immediately give it a name and boast about our foolish scholarship, which extends no further than our noses. Thus we have dismissed the entire intellectual capacity of animals, which often expresses itself in most remarkable ways, by designating it instinct. I would like, however, to have one question answered: whether the capacity to dream is consistent with the concept of instinct and blind, involuntary drives. Anyone who has watched a sleeping hunting dog knows, for example, that it dreams with great vividness. The whole hunt unfolds in its dream; it searches, snoops, moves its legs as if it were running, it pants, it drools. At the moment I do not know anything about dreaming cats."

"Kater Murr," Meister Abraham interrupted his friend, "not only dreams very vividly, but also, as may be clearly observed, slips into placid reveries, into dreamy brooding, into somnambulistic delirium—in brief, into that strange state between sleeping and waking that is supposedly the time of the actual reception of inspired thoughts. He has been in this state, groaning and moaning, so frequently of late, that I do believe he is either in love or is working on a tragedy."

Kreisler burst out laughing, "Well, come along then, you clever, charming, witty, poetical Kater Murr. Let us—"

(M.c.)[17]—my first instruction, I must still relate a great deal about my boyhood months.

It is really most remarkable and instructive when a great mind reveals in detail in his autobiography everything that happened to him in his boyhood, even if it should seem insignificant. Can anything insignificant, however, ever happen to a great genius? What-

16. An Italian clown.

17. Abbreviation for "Murr continues." This heads each section of Murr's autobiography.

ever he did or failed to do in his boyhood is of the greatest importance and illuminates the deeper meaning and the actual tendencies of his immortal works. A marvelous courage rises in the breast of the striving youth, who is tormented by fearful doubts of the adequacy of his inner strength, when he reads that the great man also played soldier as a boy, gobbled sweets, and was occasionally whipped because he was lazy, stupid, and ill mannered.[18] "Just like me! Just like me!" the youth cries enthusiastically and no longer doubts that he, too, is a great genius in spite of his adored idol.

Many have read Plutarch, and perhaps even Cornelius Nepos,[19] and have become great heroes; many have read the classical tragic poets in translation and also Calderon and Shakespeare, Goethe and Schiller, and have become, if not great poets, popular, charming little versifiers. My works too will certainly kindle the higher life of poetry in the breasts of many an intellectual and spiritual tomcat, and if the noble kitten busies himself on the roof with my biographical amusements,[20] if he becomes absorbed in the book's great ideas, which I have in my claws, then he will cry out in enthusiastic ecstasy, "Murr, divine Murr, mightiest of your race, I owe you everything! Your example alone gives me greatness!"

It is to his credit that in educating me Meister Abraham neither adhered to the principles of the forgotten Basedow[21] nor followed the methods of Pestalozzi,[22] but gave me complete freedom to educate myself as long as I submitted to certain normal principles that Meister Abraham considered essential in society, that ruling power on earth without which all would be mad confusion, broken ribs, and purple bruises, and social intercourse impossible. My master called the essence of these principles natural man-

18. Hoffmann, as noted in the Introduction, was a great admirer of Jean Jacques Rousseau. There are several ironic parallels between Hoffmann's accounts of childhood and Rousseau's; e.g., "I was a chatterer, I was greedy, and sometimes I lied. I would have stolen fruits or sweets or any kind of eatable . . ." (Book 1 [1719–23]).

19. Roman historian and biographer.

20. According to Ellinger, an allusion to Jean Paul's *Biographische Belustigungen unter der Hirnschale einer Riesen* [Biographical amusements in a giant's skull] (Berlin, 1796).

21. Johann Bernhard Basedow (1723–90), a German pedagogue whose reforms in teaching were most influential.

22. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), a Swiss pedagogue whose theories laid the foundation of modern elementary education.

ners as opposed to conventional ones, according to which one must say, "I most humbly beg your gracious pardon," when a ruffian bumps into you or steps on your toes. Even if it is true that manners like that are necessary for man, I still cannot understand why my free-born race should conform; and since the chief inspiration by which my master taught me these basic principles was a certain very evil birch rod, I can with some justification complain about the harshness of my mentor. I would have run away if a natural inclination to higher culture had not bound me firmly to my master. The more culture, the less freedom: this is a true saying. As culture increases, needs increase; as needs—well, the immediate satisfaction of natural needs regardless of time and place was the first habit my master broke me of with that fatal birch rod. Next were the desires which, I was later convinced, arise from a certain abnormal temperament. It was just this same temperament, produced perhaps by my psychic organism itself, which drove me to abandon the milk, even the meat, which my master had placed for me and to jump on the table to snatch what he himself intended to enjoy. I experienced the power of his birch rod and desisted. I realize that my master was right to direct my mind away from such things, as I know that several of my good colleagues, less cultivated and well raised than I, got into the most dreadful difficulties and the saddest situations that affected their whole lives. I know that one hopeful youth, lacking the inner spiritual strength to resist lapping up a bowl of milk, paid the penalty with the loss of his tail and, despised and mocked, had to retire into obscurity. So my master was right to break me of such habits, but I cannot forgive him for opposing my drive for learning and art.

Nothing in my master's room attracted me more than his writing table, which was covered with books, papers, and all sorts of strange instruments. I may say that this table was a magic circle to which I felt myself irresistibly drawn, and yet I felt a certain reverent awe which prevented me from completely succumbing to my instincts. One day, finally, when my master was away, I overcame my fear and jumped up on the table. What rapture when I sat among the manuscripts and books and wallowed in them! It was not wantonness—no, only desire, intellectual lust—that drove me to seize a manuscript with my paws and to toss it about until it lay in shreds before me. My master came in, saw what had happened, rushed at me with the mortifying exclamation, "Damn you, you

beast!" and whipped me with the birch rod so roughly that, whimpering with pain, I crept under the stove and could not be enticed out again by friendly words for the rest of the day. Who might not have been deterred by this experience from pursuing the path indicated to him by nature! But I had scarcely recovered completely from my aches when, obeying an irresistible drive, I jumped on the table again. To be sure, my master's shout—the word "Scat!" for example—was enough to drive me away so that I could not begin my studies. Meanwhile, I waited quietly for a favorable moment to begin my education, and this came very soon.

One day my master prepared to go out; immediately I hid myself in his room so well that he could not find me when, recollecting the torn manuscript, he wanted to chase me out. Scarcely had my master gone when I bounded onto the table in one leap and lay down in the middle of the papers, which gave me indescribable pleasure. Skillfully I opened with my paw a rather thick book which lay in front of me and tried to see if it would be possible for me to understand the letters. At first I did not succeed at all; but I did not give up and stared into the book, hoping to read by inspiration. Thus engrossed, I was surprised by my master. With a loud cry, "Look at that damned beast!" he lunged at me. It was too late to save myself; I flattened my ears, ducked as best I could, already feeling the rod on my back. But, with his hand raised, my master suddenly stopped, burst out laughing, and cried, "Pussycat, pussycat, are you reading? I cannot, I will not forbid you. Just look! Look! What a drive for culture you have." He pulled the book away from under my paws, glanced in it, and laughed even more immoderately. "I must say," he added, "I do believe you have acquired a small reference library, for I cannot otherwise imagine how this book got on my table. Well, read away—study hard, my pussycat. You may mark the most important places in the book with slight scratches; that I will allow you!" With that he pushed the opened book back to me. It was, as I later found out, Knigge's *Über den Umgang mit Menschen,*[23] and I have derived much worldly wisdom from this splendid book. It is written as if from my own soul and is quite uncommonly suitable for cats who wish to count for something in human society. This tendency in the book

23. Loosely translated: "On Getting Along with People." By Adolf Franz Friedrich Freiherr von Knigge (1752–1796). This popular book was first published in Hannover in 1788. Murr consults this book frequently.

has, as far as I know, been overlooked; and therefore it has at times been erroneously supposed that the man who observed exactly the rules laid down in the book would appear a stiff, unfeeling pedant.

Since that time, my master not only has endured me on his writing table, but he has also been pleased if I jumped up while he was working and settled down among his papers.

Meister Abraham had the habit of frequently reading aloud at length. I never neglected to arrange myself so I could look into his book, which I could do without being a nuisance to him, thanks to the excellent eyes provided me by nature. By comparing the characters with the words he spoke, I learned to read in a short time, and anyone who finds this a bit unbelievable has no conception of the unusual cleverness with which nature has endowed me. Geniuses who understand and value me will harbor no doubts about this kind of education that perhaps resembles their own. But I do not wish to omit the remarkable observation which I made concerning the comprehension of human speech. I have observed, namely, (quite consciously) that I do not at all know how I achieved this understanding. This is also supposedly true with people, which does not surprise me since that race is considerably more stupid and clumsy than we in childhood. Even as a tiny kitten, I never hit myself in the eye or touched a flame or a light or ate shoe polish instead of cherry jam, as small children frequently do.

As I could now read well and was daily cramming myself with strange ideas, I felt the irresistible urge to rescue from oblivion the thoughts produced by my innate genius; and for this, to be sure, the very difficult skill of writing was necessary. No matter how carefully I observed my master's hand when he wrote, I was quite unable to spy out the actual technique. I studied old Hilmar Curas,[24] the only book on handwriting that my master owned, and I almost came to the conclusion that the puzzling difficulty in writing could only be obviated by the large cuffs which the hand pictured in the book wore and that it was only a specially acquired skill if my master wrote without cuffs, just as the practiced tightrope walker no longer needs a pole for balancing. I looked around eagerly for some cuffs and was just about to tear up the old housekeeper's nightcap and adapt it to my right paw when, in a sudden

24. Author of a text on handwriting: *Calligraphia Regia. Königliche Schreibfeder* (Berlin, 1714).

moment of inspiration, as usually happens to us geniuses, a clever thought occurred to me which solved everything. I suspected, namely, that my inability to hold a pen just as my master did might be caused by the different structure of our hands, and this supposition was correct. I had to invent a different technique appropriate to my paw; and I really did invent this, as one can well imagine. Thus new systems arise from the individual's particular structure.

I had another real difficulty—dipping my pen into the inkwell. I could not protect my paw when dipping; it kept getting into the ink, and it was inevitable that the first letters, written more with my paw than my pen, came out big and thick. Uninformed people might, therefore, think that my first manuscripts are only papers splattered with ink. Geniuses will easily divine the inspired cat in his first works and will be astounded, even quite overcome, by the intensity of the spirit that early gushed forth from an inexhaustible source. So that the world will not at some future time quarrel about the chronological order of my immortal works, I wish to say at this point that I wrote the philosophical, sentimental, didactic novel *Thought and Presentiment or Cat and Dog* first. Even this work could have been a tremendous sensation. Then, well in the saddle, I wrote a political work entitled *Concerning Mousetraps and Their Influence on the Attitudes and Energy of Catdom.* Next I felt inspired to write the tragedy *Kawdallor, King of the Rats.*[25] This tragedy, too, could have been produced innumerable times in all imaginable theaters to the most jubilant applause. These products of my soaring spirit indicate the range of my complete works, but the occasions for writing them I will reveal at the appropriate moment.

When I had learned to hold a pen better, when my paw no longer got inky, my style became lighter, brighter, more charming. I issued poetical annuals primarily, wrote various friendly articles, and very soon became the pleasant, kindly man that I still am today. At that time I nearly composed an epic poem of twenty-four stanzas, but when I finished it, it turned out differently, for which Tasso and Ariosto can thank heaven in their graves. If an epic

25. These titles sound like parodies; but no one, to our knowledge, has identified them. In German they are *Gedanke und Ahnung oder Kater und Hund; Über Mäusefallen und deren Einfluss auf Gesinnung und Tatkraft der Katzheit;* and *Rattenkönig Kawdallor.*

poem had really sprung from my claws, not a soul would have ever bothered to read those poets again.

I now come to the—

(s.p.)—for a better understanding, it is necessary to explain clearly and distinctly to you, gentle reader, all the circumstances.

Everyone who stopped even once at the inn in the charming little village of Sieghartsweiler[26] immediately heard talk about Fürst Irenäus. If the visitor ordered trout for dinner, an excellent choice in that neighborhood, the innkeeper was sure to reply, "You are right, sir. Our gracious Fürst is uncommonly fond of eating that dish, and I can prepare it for you just as it is served at court." But since the informed traveler knew from the latest geography books, maps, and statistical information that the little town of Sieghartsweiler, along with the Geierstein and the whole surrounding area, had long ago been incorporated into the Grand Duchy through which he was traveling, he would naturally be quite surprised to find a Fürst and a court there. The matter has the following explanation: Fürst Irenäus formerly ruled over a charming little country not far from Sieghartsweiler; and since he could survey his entire state from the turret of his palace with a good spyglass, it was inevitable that he always had in view the weal and woe of his country and the fortunes of his beloved subjects. He could find out in a minute the condition of Peter's wheat in the most distant reach of his country and observe just as easily whether Hans and Kunz were tending their vineyards well and industriously. They say that Fürst Irenäus dropped his little country out of his pocket on a walk across the border; this much is certain, however, that the little country of Fürst Irenäus was infoliated and recorded in the new and enlarged edition of the Grand Duchy. He was relieved of the labor of ruling while being granted a rather considerable appanage from the revenues of the country he had ruled, money he was to spend in charming Sieghartsweiler.

In addition to the little country, Fürst Irenäus also possessed a considerable private fortune that was left to him undiminished, and thus he suddenly found himself transformed from the rank of a minor ruler to the rank of an eminent private citizen able to direct his life as he wished according to his own whims.

26. The name of the hamlet, as opposed to Sieghartshof, the name of the palace (*Weiler* is "hamlet"; *Hof* is "palace.").

Fürst Irenäus had the reputation of being a cultured citizen who was receptive to art and learning. If, in addition, he had often felt the tiresome burden of ruling painful, if, as had been rumored, he had expressed in charming verses the fanciful wish to lead a solitary, idyllic life, *procul negotiis,*[27] in a little house by a murmuring brook with a few household animals, one might have thought that now he would forget his royalty and would establish himself in an ordinary, pleasant household as is the prerogative of the rich and independent citizen. But that was not at all the case!

It is possible that the love of great lords for art and learning should merely be considered a unifying aspect of true court life. Etiquette demands owning pictures and listening to music, and it would be a bad thing if the court bookbinder should stop working and not keep binding the latest books in leather and gold. But if that love exists only as a unifying aspect of court life, then it will decline when court life does and cannot be a lasting, independent consolation for the lost throne or the wee royal bench on which one has been accustomed to sit.

Fürst Irenäus kept both court life and the love of art and learning, creating a living dream in which he, his entourage, and all of Sieghartsweiler figured.

He acted as if he were the ruling lord, kept the entire royal household—his Chancellor, his Board of Finance, etc., etc.—bestowed dynastic orders, held court, gave court balls which were usually attended by only twelve to fifteen people, since eligibility was more strictly regulated than at the most important courts; and the town was goodnatured enough to believe that the false splendor of this imaginary court was something that brought them honor and prestige. So the good people of Sieghartsweiler called Fürst Irenäus their Serene Highness, illuminated the town on his nameday and the namedays of his family, and gladly sacrificed themselves for the pleasure of the court like the Athenian citizens in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

It could not be denied that the Fürst played his part with an effective pathos and was able to impart this pathos to his entourage. His Financial Advisor, for example, always appeared at the Club at Sieghartsweiler in a laconic, dark, withdrawn mood! Clouds rest on his brow, he frequently becomes lost in thought, then starts up as if awakening suddenly! One hardly dares to speak out loud or to

27. "Away from business."

tread heavily near him. Nine o'clock strikes; he jumps up, takes his hat, all attempts to detain him are in vain; he protests with a proud and significant smile that piles of documents await him, that he will have to sacrifice the night preparing himself for the extremely vital, final quarterly meeting of the Board. He hurries away and leaves the company in reverent paralysis at the enormous importance and difficulty of his office. And the important report which the harassed man must spend the night preparing? Well, the laundry lists for the past quarter have come in from the various departments, from the kitchen, the dining room, the wardrobe, etc.; and it was he who was responsible for all matters connected with the laundry. Similarly the town felt sorry for the poor Royal Carriage Master, but carried away by the sublime pathos of the Royal Board, remarked of them, "Strict, but just." Following instructions, the man had sold a chaise[28] which was no longer usable, and the Board had given him three days, under threat of immediate dismissal, to show what he had done with the other half which might still be usable.

A special star which shone at Fürst Irenäus's court was Rätin Benzon,[29] a widow in her middle thirties, a one-time true beauty and still not without charm, the only person whose noble rank was doubtful and who, the Fürst had ruled, was permanently eligible for court. The Rätin's clear penetrating intelligence, her lively wit, her worldly knowledge, and especially that certain chilliness of character essential to the talent for ruling exerted their power so strongly that it was really she who pulled the strings of the puppet show at this miniature court. Her daughter, called Julia, had grown up with Princess Hedwiga, and the Rätin had so influenced the spiritual development of the latter that she seemed like an outsider in the royal family and differed oddly from her brother. Prince Ignaz, namely, damned to eternal childhood, could almost be called an imbecile.

Offsetting Benzon, just as influential, just as interfering in the most minute affairs of the royal house, although in quite a different way, was the strange man whom you, gentle reader, have already met as the Mâitre de Plaisir and the ironical black magician of Irenäus's court.

28. In German, a *Halbwagen;* literally, a "half-carriage."

29. The wife of a councillor *(Rat)* shares her husband's title. *Rätin* is the feminine form.

It is quite remarkable how Meister Abraham became involved with the royal family. Fürst Irenäus's late papa was a man of simple, quiet habits. He realized that any strain would necessarily break the fragile clockwork of the machine of state instead of giving it better oscillation. Therefore he let matters continue in his little country in their established pattern; and even if he thereby failed at times to reveal a dazzling intelligence or other special divine gifts, he was content that everyone in his country was well; and in regard to foreign countries, he was like those women who are most without reproach when nobody discusses them. If the Fürst's little court was stiff, ceremonial, and old-Frankish, if the Fürst was unable to accept many of the loyal ideas engendered by more recent times, it was the result of the inflexibility of the wooden framework which the Lord High Steward, the Court Marshals, and the Chamberlains had erected within it. But in this framework one driving wheel spun that no steward or marshal could ever have stopped. That was, namely, the Fürst's innate inclination for everything adventurous, strange, and mysterious. He had the habit, at times, following the example of the worthy Caliph Harun al Raschid,[30] of wandering through his city and land in disguise to satisfy or at least to seek nourishment for that idiosyncrasy which was in strange contradiction to his other inclinations. At those times he wore a round hat and a grey topcoat so that everyone knew at a glance that the Fürst was not to be recognized.

It came to pass that the Fürst, thus disguised and unrecognizable, was walking down the avenue that led from the palace to the most distant region, where a little cottage stood by itself, inhabited by the widow of a royal cook. Having arrived just in front of this cottage, the Fürst noticed two men wrapped in cloaks who were slipping out the door. He stepped to one side, and the historian of the Irenäus family, whom I am copying, maintains that the Fürst would not have been noticed and recognized then even if he had been wearing his most splendid court dress with the sparkling star of the order on it instead of his grey topcoat, because the night was black as pitch. When the two men wrapped in their cloaks slowly passed by the Fürst, he very clearly heard the following remarks. The first: "Brother Excellency, I beg you, pull yourself together; for once, do not be an ass! The man must go, before the Fürst finds out about him, because we will otherwise have that

30. See the Arabian tale *A Thousand and One Nights.*

damned sorcerer on our backs who will hurl us all to destruction with his satanic tricks." The other: "*Mon cher frère,* do not get so excited; you know my sagacity, my savoir faire. Tomorrow I will throw the dangerous person a few carolines, and then he can perform his tricks where he will. He must not stay here. Besides, the Fürst is a —"

The voices died away, so the Fürst did not find out what his Court Marshal considered him, for it was none other than he and his brother, the Headmaster of the Hunt, who had crept out of that house and carried on that embarrassing conversation. The Fürst had very easily recognized them both by their voices.

One can imagine that the Fürst had nothing more pressing to do than to seek out that person, that dangerous sorcerer, whose acquaintance he was to be deprived of. He knocked at the cottage; the widow stepped out, a light in her hand, and asked, since she saw the Fürst's round hat and topcoat, with cool politeness, "What may I do for you, Monsieur?" The Fürst was always addressed as "Monsieur" when he was disguised and unrecognizable. The Fürst inquired about the stranger who was supposed to be at the widow's and learned that the man was none other than a very clever and famous conjurer who was supplied with all kinds of testimonies, licenses, and patents and was considering performing his magic tricks here. Two gentlemen from the court, the widow related, had just been with him, whom he had astounded so completely by the inexplicable things that he showed them that they had left the house, pale, disturbed, in fact quite beside themselves.

The Fürst immediately had himself taken upstairs. Meister Abraham (it was none other who was the famous conjurer) received him like one whom he had long awaited and locked the door.

No one knows what Meister Abraham did, but it is certain that the Fürst remained all night with him and that the following day rooms were prepared in the palace into which Meister Abraham moved and to which the Fürst could go from his study by means of a secret passage without being observed. In addition, it is certain that the Fürst no longer called his Court Marshal *"mon cher ami"* and no longer let his Master of the Hunt tell him the remarkable hunting story of the white horned rabbit which he (the master of the hunt) had not been able to shoot on his first hunting expedition in the forest; and this plunged the brothers

into such misery and despair that both very shortly left the court. Lastly, it is certain that Meister Abraham astonished the court, city, and country not only by his illusionary performances but also by the growing esteem which he managed to acquire with the Fürst.

The above-mentioned historian of the Irenäus family tells so many incredible things about the magic tricks that Meister Abraham performed that one cannot repeat them without risking all the gentle reader's confidence. But that magic trick which the historian considers the most remarkable of all and which, he claims, adequately proves that Meister Abraham is in league with strange, mysterious powers is, however, nothing other than the acoustical illusion which later caused such a sensation under the designation of The Invisible Maiden[31] and which Meister Abraham already knew at that time how to perform more meaningfully, more fantastically, and more grippingly than ever was achieved later.

Incidentally, one should also know that the Fürst himself undertook certain magic operations with Meister Abraham, the purpose of which occasioned a pleasant contest of silly and senseless suppositions among the court ladies and gentlemen and other people of the court. All agreed that Meister Abraham was instructing the Fürst in the art of making gold, which they concluded from the smoke that at times poured out of the laboratory, and that he was involving him in all kinds of useful spiritual seances. Furthermore, all were absolutely convinced that the Fürst would not ratify the new mayor's commission in the little market town, nor grant the royal janitor an increase in pay, without consulting the *agatho* spirit,[32] the *spiritum familiarem,* or the stars.

When the old Fürst died and Irenäus succeeded him to the throne, Meister Abraham left the country. The young Fürst, who had inherited nothing at all of his father's inclination for the strange and the marvelous, let him go, but soon found that Meister Abraham's magic skill consisted primarily in exorcising a certain evil spirit which only too readily makes itself at home in little courts—namely, the hellish spirit of boredom. In addition, the

31. A frequently performed magic trick, popular at the end of the eighteenth century. See "Das unsichtbare Mädchen," *Zeitung für die elegante Welt,* 19, no. 52 (1809): 1665 ff. Kreisler's medium, Chiara prophesies in a somnambulistic state.

32. A Greek spirit, especially of wine.

esteem in which his father had held Meister Abraham had formed deep roots in the young Fürst's heart. There were moments when Fürst Irenäus felt as if Meister Abraham were a supernatural being, exalted high above everything human. Supposedly, this quite special feeling stemmed from an unforgettable, critical moment in the Fürst's youth. As a boy he had once entered Meister Abraham's room out of childish idle curiosity and had foolishly smashed a little machine which Meister Abraham had just constructed with great trouble and skill. Furious at this destructive clumsiness, the Meister had given the little royal rascal a tingling box on the ear and had then led him out of the room into the corridor with scarcely gentle speed. Amid gushing tears the young gentleman could only stammer, with difficulty, the words, "Abraham—*soufflet*," so that the Lord High Steward, aghast, considered it too risky to investigate any deeper into the royal secret which he only dared to guess.

The Fürst vividly felt the need of keeping Meister Abraham as the animating principle of the court machinery, but all his efforts to bring him back were in vain. Not until after that fatal walk when Fürst Irenäus lost his little country, when he had established the imaginary court at Sieghartsweiler, did Meister Abraham return; and truly he could not have come at a more appropriate time, for besides—

(M.c.)—strange event which, to use the usual expression of clever biographers, marked a division in my life.

Readers! Youths, men, women, under whose fur beats a feeling heart, who have appreciation of virtue, who recognize the sweet bonds with which nature entwines us, you will understand me and —love me!

The day had been hot; I had slept it away under the stove. Twilight was now approaching, and cool winds rushed through my master's opened window. I awoke from sleep; my heart expanded, imbued with that indescribable feeling that is both pain and pleasure and that kindles the sweetest forebodings. Overpowered by these forebodings, I raised myself up high with that expressive motion which cold mankind calls arching! Out—out into nature I was driven! I went up, therefore, onto the roof and strolled around in the rays of the setting sun. There I heard sounds coming up from the attic, so gentle, so mysterious, so well known, so enticing—an unknown something drew me down with

irresistible might. I left lovely nature and crept through a small hole in the roof into the attic. Having jumped down, I saw a large, beautiful, white and black spotted cat who was sitting comfortably on her haunches, making those enticing sounds and piercing me with her searching glance. I at once sat down opposite her and, succumbing to an impulse, tried to join the song which the white and black spotted cat was singing. This was an immeasurable success, even if I do say so myself, and from this moment—I note this for the psychologists who are studying me and my life—is dated my belief in my innate musical talent and, as is to be expected, with this belief also the talent itself. The spotted cat looked at me more sharply and searchingly, was suddenly silent, and sprang at me with a mighty leap! Expecting nothing good, I showed my claws; but in that very moment the spotted cat, while bright tears poured out of her eyes, exclaimed, "Son—oh son! Come!—hasten to my paws!" And then embracing me, pressing me to her breast with rapture, "Yes, it is you, my son, my good son, whom I bore without special pains!"

I was deeply moved, and this feeling alone convinced me that the spotted cat was really my mother; nevertheless, I asked her if she was quite sure of this.

"Ha, this similarity," the spotted cat said, "this similarity, these eyes, these features, these whiskers, this fur, everything reminds me only too vividly of the faithless, ungrateful cat that deserted me. You are quite the exact image of your father, dear Murr (for so you are named); I hope, however, that with your father's beauty you have inherited your mother's kindlier disposition and gentle manners. Your father had a very aristocratic manner, an impressive majesty rested on his brow, his green eyes sparkled with intelligence, and an attractive smile often played around his whiskers and cheeks. These physical advantages, as well as his lively spirit and a certain charming facility with which he caught mice, enabled him to win my heart. But there was soon revealed a hard, tyrannical spirit that he had known how to conceal so long. I say it with horror! You were scarcely born when your father developed the unholy desire to eat you and your brothers."

"Dearest Mother," I interrupted the spotted cat, "dearest mother, do not condemn that inclination completely. The most educated race in the world attributed the strange taste for eating children to the gods, but a Jupiter was saved and so was I!"

"I do not understand you, my son," replied Mina. "It seems

to me that you are talking nonsense or that you even want to defend your father. Don't be ungrateful; you would certainly have been strangled and eaten by the bloodthirsty tyrant if I had not defended you so bravely with these sharp claws, if, fleeing now here, now there—to the cellar, to the attic, to the stalls—I had not rescued you from the persecution of that unnatural barbarian. He finally left me; I have never seen him again! And yet my heart still beats for him! He was a beautiful tomcat! Many thought him a traveling count because of his dignity and good manners. I believed then that, performing my maternal duties in a little domestic circle, I would be able to live a quiet life; but the most horrible blow was still to strike me. Once when I came home from a short walk, I found you and your brothers gone!" (An old woman had found me in my nook the day before and had spoken all sorts of dreadful words about throwing cats into the water and such!) "Well, what happiness that you, my son, were saved! Come to my breast again, beloved!"

My spotted mother caressed me with all sincerity and asked me then about the detailed circumstances of my life. I told her everything and did not forget to mention my extensive education and how I had achieved it.

Mina seemed less impressed by her son's unusual accomplishments than one would have thought. Yes, she gave me clearly to understand that, with my extraordinary mind and my deep learning, I had turned into strange paths that could lead me to destruction. She particularly warned me never to reveal my acquired learning to Meister Abraham, as he would only use this to keep me in the most oppressive slavery.

"I cannot, indeed, boast of having your education," said Mina, "however, I am not without natural capabilities and pleasant talents implanted in me by nature. Among these, for example, I count the power of making crackling sparks flash from my fur when I am stroked. And what unpleasantness this single talent has caused me! Children and adults have constantly ruffled my back just for the fireworks, a torment to me, and when I indignantly jumped away or showed my claws, I was scolded for being a shy, wild beast, indeed I was even beaten. As soon as your Meister Abraham finds out that you can write, he will make you his copyist, and what you now do for pleasure will be demanded of you as an obligation."

Mina spoke still more about my relation to Meister Abraham and about my education. I did not realize until later that what I had believed to be a prejudice against learning was really a knowledge of life that the spotted cat possessed.

I learned that Mina was living with the old lady next door in rather needy circumstances and that it was often difficult for her to satisfy her hunger. This touched me deeply; a childlike love awoke in all its might in my breast. I remembered the beautiful fish head which I had put away from yesterday's dinner and decided to present it to my good mother, whom I had found again so unexpectedly.

Who can measure the fickleness of the hearts of those who wander in the moonlight! Why has destiny not sealed our hearts to the wild play of unholy passions! Why must we, thin wavering reeds, bend before life's storm? Hostile destiny! O Appetite, thy name is Tomcat![33] With the fish head in my jaws, I, a pious Aeneas, climbed onto the roof. I intended to go in the attic window! Then I got into a strange state, in which, though I was in some peculiar way alienated from myself, I still seemed my true self. (I think I have expressed myself clearly and distinctly so that everyone will recognize in this description of my strange condition the psychologist observing his spiritual depths.) I continue!

That odd sensation, woven of desire and aversion, stupefied my senses, overwhelmed me—resistance was impossible—I ate the fishhead!

Uneasily I heard Mina meowing, uneasily heard her calling my name. I felt filled with remorse, with shame; I sprang back into my master's room; I crept under the stove. There the most fearful imaginings tormented me. I saw Mina, my newly-found, spotted mother, miserable, abandoned, yearning for the food which I had promised, close to unconsciousness. Ha! The wind whistling through the chimney called the name Mina—Mina. Mina, it rustled among my master's papers, and rattled in the fragile cane chairs; Mina, Mina, the stove door lamented—oh, it was a bitter, lacerating emotion that penetrated me. I decided, if pos-

33. See Hamlet's speech about his mother, I, ii, 146, to appreciate the condensation of this parodied quotation:

> Why she would hang on him,
> As if increase of appetite had grown
> By what it fed on, and yet, within a month—
> Let me not think on't. Frailty, thy name is woman—

sible, to invite the poor one for breakfast milk. Like a cooling, comforting shadow a blessed peace swept over me at this thought. I flattened my ears and fell asleep!

You sensitive souls who understand me so completely, if you are not otherwise donkeys but true, respectable tomcats, you, I say, will understand that this storm in my breast cheered my boyhood sky like a benign hurricane that scatters the dark clouds and creates the clearest prospect. Oh! So heavily the fish head at first rested on my soul, yet I learned to understand what is meant by appetite and that it is sacrilege to resist Mother Nature. Let each seek his own fish heads and not anticipate the sagacity of others who, guided by the right appetite, will find their own.

Thus I conclude this episode of my life which—

(s.p.)—nothing is more vexing for a historian or biographer than to ride back and forth on a wild filly, galloping over sticks and stones, over fields and meadows, always seeking paved roads and never coming to them. Thus, too, fears the man who has undertaken to set down for you, beloved reader, what he has learned about the strange life of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler. The writer would like to have begun: In the little town of N. or B. or K. on a Whitsuntide Monday or at Easter of such and such a year, Johannes Kreisler first saw the light of the world! But such a beautiful, chronological arrangement cannot be used, since only oral accounts, imparted piecemeal, are at the unfortunate narrator's disposal, which he must record at once so as not to lose the whole thing from his mind. How the imparting of this information actually took place, you, my very dear reader, will find out before the end of the book, and then you will perhaps excuse the rhapsodical nature of the whole account, and perhaps you will also realize that, in spite of it seeming disconnected, there is a firm thread that runs through, tying all the parts together.

Just at this moment, the following must be narrated. Not long after Fürst Irenäus had settled in Sieghartsweiler, Princess Hedwiga and Julia were strolling one lovely summer afternoon through the delightful park at Sieghartshof. Like a golden veil, the glow of the setting sun spread over the forest. Not a leaf stirred. Trees and bushes were waiting in portentous silence for the evening wind to come and caress them. Only the murmur of the forest brook which splashed over the white pebbles interrupted

the deep silence. Their arms entwined, silent, the girls wandered along the narrow flowery paths and over the bridges which led across the brook's various loops, until they came to the end of the park, to the large lake in which the distant Geierstein, with its picturesque ruins, was reflected.

"How lovely it is!" cried Julia from the depths of her soul.

"Let us go into the fisherman's hut," said Hedwiga. "The afternoon sun burns fearfully, and in the hut the view of the Geierstein through the middle window is more beautiful than from here, because there the countryside is not a panorama but an arranged view, a painting."

Julia followed the princess who, scarcely having entered, and looking out of the window, longed for some crayons and paper to sketch the view in the light which she called uncommonly "piquant."

"I might," said Julia, "I might almost envy you your skill in sketching trees and shrubs, mountains and lakes, so exactly from nature. But I know that even if I could draw as prettily as you, I would still never be able to copy a landscape from nature; and the more glorious the view, the less I could do it. With all my delight and rapture in looking, I would never get to work." At Julia's words, a special smile, which might be considered unsuitable for a sixteen-year-old girl, flitted across the princess's countenance. Meister Abraham, who sometimes expressed himself queerly, said such twitching of the facial muscles could be compared to a swirling on the surface of the sea when something threatening is stirring in the depths. Enough of that. Princess Hedwiga smiled, but as she parted her rosy lips to reply to the gentle, inartistic Julia, musical chords were suddenly heard which were struck so violently and loudly that the instrument scarcely seemed to be an ordinary guitar.

The princess became silent and she and Julia hurried outside the fisherman's hut.

Now they heard one melody after the other, joined together by the strangest transitions, by the most unfamiliar chord sequences. From time to time a sonorous masculine voice could be heard which sometimes drained all the sweetness of the Italian song, sometimes broke off suddenly, changed abruptly to serious, somber melodies, sometimes became a recitative, and sometimes interrupted with strong, violently accented words.

The guitar was tuned—then chords again—then again stopped and tuned—then violent words, spoken as if in anger—then melodies—then tuned again.

Curious about this queer virtuoso, Hedwiga and Julia crept nearer and nearer until they saw a man dressed in black who, his back turned to them, was sitting on a rock right beside the lake and was carrying on this odd game of singing and talking.

He had just tuned his guitar again in a peculiar fashion to a completely different pitch and was trying several chords while at the same time complaining: "Wrong again—no tonal purity—now it is a fraction too low, now a fraction too high!"

With both hands he then seized the instrument, which he detached from the blue ribbon by which it hung around his shoulders, held it up and began: "Tell me, you stubborn little thing, where is your harmony? Into what corner of your interior has your pure scale crept? Or do you intend to rebel against your master and claim that his ear has been smashed in the smithy of a balanced temperature and that his enharmonics are only a childish trick? You are mocking me, I feel, although my beard is trimmed more neatly than that of Maestro Stefano Pacini,[34] *detto il Venetiano,* who placed the gift of harmony inside you and which remains an insoluble secret to me. And, dear thing, let me warn you that if you will not allow the combination of Gs and As or Cs and Ds, or of all the sounds, I will set nine German masters on you to scold you and to tame you with enharmonic words. You may fling yourself into Pacini's arms; you must have the last word like a shrewish wife. Or are you impertinent and proud enough to believe that all the pretty spirits which live in you only obey the potent magic of the enchanter who has long since been buried, and that in the hands of a fool—"[35]

At these last words the man stopped suddenly, jumped up, and stared into the lake as though lost in thought. Fascinated by

34. If Pacini existed, he left this world without a trace.

35. Hoffmann uses the word *Hasenfuss* for "fool," as does Goethe in the *Xenien,* no. 363. Literally "hare-foot," the word usually means "coward." It is applied both to Kreisler and to Murr—and only to them—in *Kater Murr.*

In Hoffmann's first novel, *Die Elixiere des Teufels (The Devil's Elixirs),* the concept of *Naarheit* ("eccentricity") is discussed, and it is made clear that being a *Hasenfuss* protects one from insanity by serving as an emotional safety valve; hence, the term is not pejorative because it implies an artistic temperament.

the man's strange actions, the girls stood behind the bush as though rooted to the ground; they scarcely dared to breathe.

"The guitar," the man finally burst forth, "is the most miserable, the most imperfect instrument of all the instruments, only worth being picked up by cooing, love-sick shepherds who have lost the mouthpiece of the pipe which they otherwise prefer to blow gaily to wake the echo with bovine songs of sweetest longing and to send plaintive melodies to their Emmelines[36] in the distant mountains, who are herding the sweet cattle with a merry cracking of their sensitive whips! O Lord!—teach these shepherds, who 'sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad made to his mistress' eyebrow,'[37] that the triad consists of simply three sounds and can be knifed by the dagger of the septimole and put a guitar in their hands! What is all this moaning and groaning to serious men of mediocre education who have studied the wisdom of Greece and know well what is going on at the courts of Peking or Nanking but do not know a damned thing about being shepherds and raising sheep? Fool, what are you up to? Remember the late Hippel,[38] who asserts that if he should see a man giving lessons in banging on the piano, he would feel as if said teacher were boiling eggs—and now strumming guitars—fool—oh hell!" At that the man hurled the instrument far off into the bushes and strode off quickly without noticing the girls.

"Well," said Julia after a while, laughing. "Well, Hedwiga, what have you to say about this strange apparition? Where did that queer man come from, who knows how to talk so prettily to his instrument and then throws it away in disgust like a broken box?"

"It is wrong," said Hedwiga, as if with sudden rising anger, her pale cheeks flushed scarlet. "It is wrong that the park is not closed, that any stranger can come in."

"What!" replied Julia. "Do you think the Fürst should selfishly keep out the people of Sieghartsweiler—no, not only

36. A main character in the opera *Die Schweizer Familie* [The Swiss family] written in 1809 by Joseph Weigl (1766–1846).

37. *As You Like It,* II, vii, 147–48.

38. Theodore Gottlieb von Hippel (1741–96), satirical and humorous writer who was the uncle of one of Hoffmann's schoolmates and a close acquaintance. Ellinger has pointed out the following passage in Hippel's *Über die Ehe* [On marriage]: "If a male sings, he is either a eunuch or a Frenchman or a dandy; and if I watch a male being instructed in singing, I feel as if he were boiling eggs." *(Sämtliche Werke,* [Berlin, 1828], 5:267)

these—anyone who happens along, from the most attractive place in the whole area! That cannot be your serious opinion!"

"You are not considering," continued the princess, still more agitated, "you are not considering the danger which arises for us from this. We often wander around here quite alone, as today, far from all the servants, along the most remote forest paths! Suppose some wicked man—"

"Indeed," Julia interrupted the Princess. "I do believe you are afraid that some unslaughtered fairy-tale giant or fabled robber-knight might jump out of the shrubbery and carry us off to his castle! Well, may heaven forbid it! But I must confess to you that some little adventure in the lonely, romantic forest might seem very nice, very pleasant. I am thinking about Shakespeare's *As You Like It* that Mother would not let us have for so long and that Lothario finally read aloud to us. I suspect you would like a little to play Celia, and I would be your true Rosalind. What shall we make out of our unknown virtuoso?"

"Oh," replied the Princess, "the unknown person. Do you really think, Julia, that his figure, his strange talk aroused in me a horror that is incomprehensible? I am still trembling with fright; I am close to succumbing to a strange and horrible emotion that has paralyzed my senses. A memory is stirring in the hidden depths of my mind and is struggling in vain to take clear shape. I have seen this person involved in some dreadful occurrence that lacerated my heart—perhaps it was only a phantom dream, the memory of which stayed with me. Enough—this person and his strange behavior, his confused talk, seemed to me to be a threatening ghost who wished, perhaps, to entice us into a fatal, magic circle."

"What fancies!" cried Julia. "For my part, I would transform this black spirit with his guitar into the melancholy Jacques or even into the honorable Touchstone, whose philosophy sounds almost like the stranger's queer speeches. But now it is important to rescue the poor little thing which the barbarian hurled so venomously into the shrubbery."

"Julia—what are you doing—for heaven's sakes!" cried the Princess; but ignoring her, Julia slipped into the shrubbery and after a few minutes returned triumphantly, the guitar which the stranger had thrown away in her hand.

The Princess overcame her dread and looked very carefully

at the instrument, the strange shape of which indicated a great age, even if this had not been confirmed by the date and the name of the master, which could be clearly seen on the bottom through the opening. These words were etched in black: *Stefano Pacini fec. Venet. 1532.*[39]

Julia could not resist it; she plucked a chord on the graceful instrument and was almost alarmed at the powerful, full tone which resounded from the little thing. "Oh, wonderful—wonderful!" she cried, and played on. Since she was in the habit of accompanying her singing on the guitar, inevitably she began unconsciously to sing while they were strolling along. The Princess followed her in silence. Julia stopped; then Hedwiga spoke: "Sing, play on the magic instrument. Perhaps you will be able to exorcise the evil, hostile demons that sought power over me and to send them back to the underworld."

"What do you mean," replied Julia, "with your evil spirits? They should always be and remain strangers to us both, but I will sing and play, for I do not think I have ever had an instrument in my hand that suited me so well as this one. It also seems to me as if my voice sounded much better than usual." She began a well-known Italian song and lost herself in all kinds of graceful melodies, daring runs and capriccios, giving scope to the full range of tones that dwelt in her breast.

If the Princess had been frightened by the sight of the unknown person, Julia froze to a statue when, just as she was about to turn into another path, he suddenly appeared in front of her.

The stranger, probably about thirty years old, was dressed in black in accord with the latest style. There was nothing strange or unusual in his entire outfit, and yet his appearance had something odd and unfamiliar about it. In spite of the cleanliness of his clothing, there was visible a certain carelessness that did not seem to result so much from lack of care as from the fact that the stranger had been forced to walk a road he had not expected and for which his clothing was not suitable. His vest torn; his neckerchief only carelessly wrapped around his neck; his shoes, on which the golden buckles were scarcely visible, thickly coated with dust, he stood there and looked rather silly in his three-cornered hat, which was

39. See note 34 above.

only meant to be carried under his arm, the brim turned down in back to protect him from the sun. He had forced his way through the thickest shrubbery in the park, for his tangled black hair was full of pine needles. He looked at the Princess fleetingly and then let the soulful, shining glance of his large, dark eyes rest on Julia, whose embarrassment was thereby increased so that tears came to her eyes, as was usual in such circumstances.

"And these divine tones," the stranger finally began with a soft, gentle voice. "And these divine tones cease at my appearance and dissolve into tears?"

The Princess, overcoming with effort the first impression that the stranger had made on her, looked at him disdainfully and then spoke in an almost cutting tone. "At any rate your sudden appearance surprised us, my dear sir! Strangers are not expected at this hour in the royal park. I am the Princess Hedwiga."

The stranger had quickly turned to the Princess as soon as she began to speak and now looked into her eyes, but his entire face seemed to have become a different one. Erased was the expression of melancholy yearning; erased was every trace of the deeply aroused spirit. A crazily distorted smile heightened the expression of bitter irony to drollness, to ludicrousness. The Princess stopped in the middle of her speech as if stunned by an electric charge and, scarlet of face, cast down her eyes.

It seems as if the stranger was about to say something, but at that moment Julia began, "Am I not a foolish, silly thing that I become frightened and weep like a little child who has been caught nibbling! Yes, my dear sir, I have nibbled, nibbled the most glorious tones in your guitar. It is all the fault of the guitar, and of our curiosity! We observed how prettily you were speaking to the little thing and how you then angrily hurled the poor thing into the shrubbery, so that it sighed with a mournful complaint! That, too, we saw. And that so touched my heart that I had to slip into the shrubbery and rescue the dear, pretty instrument. Well, you know how girls are; I strummed a little on the guitar, and then my fingers got excited—I could not stop. Forgive me, my dear sir, and take back your instrument."

Julia handed the stranger the instrument.

"It is," said the stranger, "a very rare, melodious instrument from the good old days, that only in my awkward hands—but what hands—what hands! The wonderful spirit of harmony which be-

friends this rare little thing also lives in my breast, but as a chrysalis, not capable of free movement; but from you, Fräulein, it soars to luminous, divine spheres, with a thousand shimmering colors like a brilliant butterfly. Ah, Fräulein, when you sang, all love's yearning pain, all the rapture of sweet dreams, hopes, desire surged through the forest and settled like refreshing dew into fragrant flower chalices, into the breasts of hearkening nightingales! Keep the instrument; you alone can command the magic which is locked in it."

"You threw the instrument away," replied Julia, blushing deeply.

"It is true," said the stranger as he took the guitar violently and pressed it to his breast. "It is true, I threw it away and I accept it back, made holy; never again will it leave my hands!"

Suddenly the stranger's face transformed itself again into that ludicrous mask, and he spoke in a shrill, cutting tone. "Actually fate, or my evil demon, has played me a very bad trick, that I had to appear so *ex abrupto,* as the Latin scholars and other honorable people say, my dear ladies! Oh Lord, gracious Princess, risk looking at me from head to foot. You will then deign to assume from my appearance that I am undertaking an important visit. Ha, I was just planning to drive by Sieghartsweiler to deliver, if not my person, at least my visiting card to the good city. Oh Lord! Do you think I lack proper connections, gracious Princess? Was not your father's Court Chamberlain formerly my intimate friend? I know that if he saw me here, he would clasp me to his satin breast and say, touched, while he offered me snuff, 'Here we are alone, my friend, I can give free reign to my heart and to the most pleasant thoughts.' I would have had an audience with the most gracious Fürst Irenäus and would have been presented to you, O Princess. Presented in such a manner that I will wager my best pair of seventh chords against a box on the ear that I would have won your favor. But now! Here in the garden in the most unsuitable place, between the duck pond and the frog pond, I must present myself, to my eternal misfortune! Oh Lord, if I could only work a bit of magic, if I could only *subito* transform this noble toothpick box" (he took one out of his vest pocket) "into the smartest Chamberlain at Irenäus's court, who would take me by my wing and would say, 'Most gracious Princess, here is so-and-so!' But now!—*che far, che dir!* Mercy—mercy, O Princess, O ladies!—O sirs!"

With that the stranger threw himself down before the Princess and sang in a shrill voice, *"Ah pietà, pietà Signora!"*[40]

The Princess seized Julia, shouting loudly, "A madman! A madman has escaped from the lunatic asylum!" and ran with her from there as quickly as she could.

Just outside the palace, the Rätin Benzon came towards the girls, who almost collapsed, out of breath, at her feet. "What has happened, for heaven's sake, what has happened to you? Why are you running?" she asked. Beside herself and disturbed as she was, the Princess was only able to stammer in disconnected phrases something about a lunatic who had accosted them. Julia related calmly and with composure what had happened, ending by saying that she did not think the stranger was insane but only an ironical rascal, a kind of melancholy Jacques who might well fit into the comedy in the Forest of Arden.

Rätin Benzon made her repeat everything, asked about the smallest details, had the stranger described as to walk, posture, gestures, tone of voice, etc. "Yes," she cried then, "yes, it is quite certain; it is he, it is he himself—it can be, must be, none other."

"Who—who is it?" asked the Princess impatiently.

"Calm yourself, dear Hedwiga," replied Benzon. "You have got out of breath to no purpose; the stranger who seemed so threatening to you is not a maniac. Whatever kind of bitter, unsuitable joke he permitted himself in his baroque manner, I believe you will be able to make your peace with him."

"Never!" cried the Princess, "I will never see him again, the—inconvenient fool."

"Oh Hedwiga," said Benzon, laughing, "what inspiration gave you the word inconvenient? After what has happened, it is more suitable than even you could either suspect or believe."

"I don't understand at all," Julia began, "how you can be so angry with the stranger, dear Hedwiga! Even in his foolish actions, in his confused speeches, there was something which stirred my inmost self in a strange and not unpleasant way."

"You are lucky," replied the Princess as tears filled her eyes, "you are lucky that you can be so serene and dispassionate, but the scorn of that dreadful man lacerates my heart. Benzon! Who is the lunatic?"

40. According to Ellinger, a humorous use of the opening lines of the *Miserere* by Nicole Jommeli (1714–74).

"In two words," Benzon spoke, "I will explain everything. Five years ago when I—"

(M.c.)—convinced me that childlike virtue and pity for the afflictions of his companions also dwell in a true poet's deepest soul.

A certain melancholy, that often overtakes young romanticists when they are coping with the developmental struggle of the great and elevated thoughts in their souls, drove me to solitude. Roof, cellar, and attic remained unvisited for some time. I experienced with that poet the sweet idyllic pleasures in the little cottage on the bank of a murmuring brook,[41] shaded by the gloomy, leafy birches and the weeping willows, and remained under the stove, abandoning myself to my dreams. Thus it happened, however, that I did not see Mina again, my sweet, beautifully spotted mother. I found comfort and serenity in learning. There is something splendid about scholarship! Thanks, ardent thanks to the noble man who invented it! How much more wonderful, how much more useful is this invention than that of that dreadful monk who first undertook to make gunpowder, a thing I mortally hate because of its nature and its effect. Posterity has condemned the barbarian, the hellish Barthold,[42] with mocking scorn by praising the brilliant scholar, the well-rounded statistician, or the man of exquisite culture with the maxim: *He* did not invent gunpowder!

I must not leave unsaid, for the instruction of aspiring young tomcats, that whenever I wanted to study, I jumped at my master's library with my eyes closed and then pulled out the book I had clawed and read it, no matter what the contents. By studying thus, my spirit acquired that flexibility and universality, my knowledge that bright, splendid richness which posterity will admire in me. I will not mention the books that I read one after the other during this period of poetic melancholy, partly because a more appropriate place for that may occur, partly because I have forgotten the titles, and then again because I usually never read the titles and therefore never knew them. Everyone is doubtless satisfied

41. Murr is echoing Fürst Irenäus's father, who expressed a similar romantic wish on p. 35.

42. The invention of gunpowder has sometimes been attributed, especially in Germany, to Barthold Schwarz, a fourteenth century German Franciscan monk and alchemist.

with this explanation and will not accuse me of biographical frivolity.

New experiences were awaiting me.

One day, when my master was deep in a large folio volume that he had open in front of him, and I, lying next to him under the writing table on a sheet of the loveliest vellum paper, was attempting Greek letters, which seemed particularly adapted to my paws, there entered suddenly a young man whom I had seen at my master's house several times and who treated me with friendly respect, even with the kindly reverence which is due the outstanding genius. Not only did he always say "Good morning, puss" to me after he had greeted my master, he also lightly scratched me behind my ears and gently stroked my back, so that I felt truly inspired to let my spiritual gifts shine before the world.

Everything was to be different today!

For the first time ever, a black, hairy monster with glowing eyes leaped through the door behind the young man and, when it saw me, dashed straight at me. An indescribable fear seized me; with one leap I landed on my master's writing table and uttered cries of horror and despair when the monster leaped high in the air beside the table, at the same time making a murderous racket. Afraid for me, my good master took me in his arms and hid me under his dressing gown; but the young man said, "Do not worry, dear Meister Abraham. My poodle never harms cats; he only wants to play. Put your cat down; you will enjoy seeing the little people making each other's acquaintance."

My master was really about to put me down, but I clung firmly to him and began to mew so pitifully that I at least persuaded my master to put me down right next to him on the chair.

Emboldened by my master's protection, I sat on my haunches, my tail wrapped around me, in an attitude of dignity and pride which could not but impress my supposed, black enemy. The poodle sat down on the floor in front of me, looked me straight in the eye, and spoke to me in broken phrases that, to be sure, were incomprehensible to me. I gradually lost my fear. Having become completely calm, I was able to notice that there was nothing but friendliness and ingenuousness in the poodle's expression. Unconsciously I began to express my growing feeling of trust with a back and forth motion of my tail, and immediately the poodle began to wag his little tail in the most charming manner.

Ah, my soul had spoken to him; there was no longer any doubt of our spiritual harmony! "How," I said to myself, "how could this stranger's unusual behavior have caused you such fear and alarm? What did this leaping, this barking, this running, this howling indicate except a youth violently and mightily aroused to love and pleasure? Ah, virtue and noble poodleness dwell in that black furred breast!" Strengthened by these thoughts, I decided to take the first step to a closer, more intimate union of our souls and to climb down from my master's chair.

As soon as I got up and stretched, the poodle jumped up and ran around the room yipping. Expressions of a marvelous, vigorous spirit! There was nothing more to fear, and so I climbed down immediately and cautiously tiptoed over to my new friend. We began that performance which expresses in a meaningful, symbolic way the closer recognition of sympathetic souls, the sealing of a spiritual pact which shortsighted, malicious men designate with the vulgar, ignoble expression of "sniffing." My black friend showed a desire to enjoy some of the chicken bones that were in my dish. As well as I could, I gave him to understand that it was in conformity to civilization and hospitality to entertain him as my guest. He gobbled the bones with an astonishing appetite while I watched him from afar. (But it was a good thing that I had put aside the fried fish and stored it under my bed.) After the meal we played the most charming games until finally, united heart and soul, we embraced, and holding tight to each other, we rolled over and over, swearing sincere loyalty and friendship.

I do not know what this concordance of beautiful souls,[43] this mutual recognition of warm, youthful spirits could contain that was ridiculous; but so much is certain, that both my master and the strange young man, to my no little annoyance, continuously roared with laughter.

This new friendship had made such an impression on me that in the sunshine and in the shade, on the roof or under the stove, I thought of nothing, dreamed of nothing, felt nothing but poodle—poodle—poodle! And so the essence of poodleness revealed itself to me in shining colors; and from this recognition was born that

43. "Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele," [Confessions of a beautiful soul], the sixth book of Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre,* had aroused great enthusiasm, but the *schöne Seele* became an object of good-natured parody.

thoughtful work which I have already mentioned, namely, *Thought and Presentiment or Dog and Cat.* I showed how the customs, habits, and language of both species are profoundly determined by their most basic essence and proved that both were only variant rays cast from one prism. Above all, I interpreted the character of language and proved that, since language is only a symbolic representation of the formation of a sound, consequently there could only be *one* language, that the feline language and the canine language in the special formation of Poodlish were only branches of one tree and that dogs and cats, inspired by a higher spirit, could therefore understand each other. In order to clarify my theory completely, I gave several examples from both languages and pointed out the identical roots of bow-wow—mau-meow—yip—ssfft—grr—prrr, etc.

When the book was finished, I felt an irresistible desire to learn the Poodle language thoroughly, which I managed to do with the help of my newly won friend, the poodle Ponto, although not without effort, since Poodlish is a really difficult language for cats. But geniuses manage everything, and it is just this capacity that a famous human writer failed to recognize when he claimed that, in order to speak a foreign language, with all its native peculiarities, like a native, one must be a bit of a fool.[44] My master had this same opinion and only accepted a scholarly knowledge of a foreign language, which knowledge he contrasted to gabbing, by which he meant the skill to speak in a foreign language about nothing at all. He even believed that the speaking of French at court by our ladies and gentlemen was a kind of sickness which, like cataleptic seizures, has horrible symptoms; and I heard him making this absurd claim to the Fürst's Court Chamberlain himself.

"Please be so good," said Meister Abraham, "please be so good and observe yourself. Has not heaven lent you a beautiful, melodic voice, and when French seizes hold of you, you suddenly begin to hiss, to lisp, to snarl and at the same time you distort your pleasant features quite horribly and even the nice, firm, serious deportment of which you are capable is distorted by all kinds of strange convulsions. What else can this mean but the indignant revolt of some disagreeable, pathological goblin inside you!" The

44. Ellinger has pointed out that this statement was made by Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. See *Vermischte Schriften* (Göttingen, 1800), 1:280).

Court Chamberlain laughed heartily, and Meister Abraham's hypothesis that foreign languages are an illness was also laughable.

An intelligent scholar offers the advice in some book or other that one should try to *think* in the foreign language that one wants to learn quickly. The advice is excellent, but its execution is not without danger. I succeeded very quickly in learning to think in Poodlish, but I became so absorbed in these Poodlish thoughts that real facility in my own language was delayed, and I myself did not understand what I was thinking. These thoughts that I did not understand, I generally put down on paper, and I am astonished at the depth of these jottings, which I collected under the title *Acanthus Leaves*[45] and which I still do not understand.

I believe that these brief hints about my boyhood months may suffice to give the reader a clear picture of what I am and how I became that way. But I cannot possibly leave the heyday of my remarkable, eventful life without mentioning one occurrence which, to a certain extent, marked the transition to the years of more mature development. Feline youth will learn from it that there is no rose without thorns and that many a hindrance blocks the soaring spirit, many a stumbling stone is thrown in the path, on which the paws wound themselves. And the pain of such wounds is grievous, very grievous!

No doubt you, beloved reader, have envied me my happy boyhood and the favorable star that watched over me. Born in need, of respectable but poor parents, close to a disgraceful death, I suddenly fall into the lap of plenty, into literature's Peruvian mine! Nothing interferes with my education, nothing opposes my inclinations; with giant steps I march towards a perfection which raises me high above my time. Then a toll collector suddenly stops me and demands the payment to which we are all subject!

Who would have thought that thorns which were to scratch me, wound me bloodily, were hidden among the flowers of the sweetest, most intimate friendship!

Everyone who has a feeling heart in his bosom, as I have, will very easily be able to deduce from what I say about my relationship with the poodle Ponto what that dear one meant to me, and

45. *Akanthusblätter.* The title is a parody of the *Lotusblätter* by Isadorus Orientalis (Otto Heinrich Graf von Loeben), published by C. F. Kunz in Bamberg in 1817. Hoffmann wrote a damning commentary on this work in a letter to Kunz, November 25, 1816.

yet it had to be he who was the original occasion of that catastrophe which could have destroyed me completely if the spirit of my ancestors had not watched over me. Yes, gentle reader, I had an ancestor, an ancestor without whom I probably would not have existed—a great, excellent ancestor, a man of position, repute, wealth, extensive knowledge, of a quite special kind of virtue, endowed with the finest humanity, a man of elegance and taste of the most modern sort—a man who—but all this is just by-the-way; in the future, more about the worthy man who was none other than the world-famous Prime Minister Hinz of Hinzenfeldt, who, under the name of Puss-in-Boots, became so dear to the world and so invaluable.

As I have said, more in the future of the noblest cat of all.[46]

Could it be otherwise? When I was at last able to express myself easily and elegantly in Poodlish, did I not have to speak with my friend Ponto about the most important things in my life, namely, about myself and my works? Thus it was that he became acquainted with my special intellectual gifts, with my originality, with my talent; and here I discovered to my sorrow, my no small sorrow, that an irrepressible frivolity, even a certain arrogance, made it impossible for the youthful Ponto to accomplish anything in the arts and in scholarship. Instead of being astonished at my erudition, he assured me that it was incomprehensible how I could think of concerning myself with such matters and that he, for his part, as far as the arts were concerned, would simply restrict himself to jumping over a stick and to fetching his master's hat from the water, but as to scholarship, it was his opinion that people like myself would only ruin their stomachs and quite lose their appetites.

During such a conversation in which I tried to teach my frivolous friend something better, the most dreadful thing happened. Before I was aware of it—

(s.p.) "And you will always," replied Benzon, "create nothing but disturbances—confusion—a complete dissonance in all human relationships as they now exist with this fantastic eccentricity, this lacerating irony."

"Oh wonderful Kapellmeister," cried Johannes Kreisler, laughing, "who is capable of such dissonances!"

"Be serious," continued the Rätin. "Be serious; you will not

46. *Julius Caesar,* V, v, 68: "This was the noblest Roman of them all."

escape me by a bitter joke. I will hold on tight to you, dear Johannes! I will call you by the gentle name Johannes so that I may at least hope that behind the satyr's mask a gentle spirit is hidden after all. And then! I will never be convinced that the bizarre name Kreisler was not smuggled in and substituted for a quite different family name."

"Rätin," said Kreisler, the muscles of his face twitching in a thousand folds and furrows. "Dearest Rätin, what do you have against my honorable name? Perhaps I had another one once, but that was a long time ago. It is the same with me as with the councillor in Tieck's *Blaubart,*[47] who says, 'I used to have quite an excellent name, but during the course of time I have almost forgotten it; I can only dimly remember it.' "

"Think hard, Johannes," cried the Rätin, piercing him with her radiant glance. "The half-forgotten name will surely come to mind again."

"Definitely not, my dear," replied Kreisler. "That is impossible, and I almost suspect that the dim memory of how I once fared differently in regard to my name, life's passport, derives from that pleasant time before I was born. Show me the kindness, dearest lady, of considering my name in its proper light and you will find it most charming in regard to design, color, and structure! Even more! If you reverse it, or dissect it with a grammatical anatomical knife, its inner structure is even more wonderful. It is quite impossible, dear lady, to find the derivation of my name in the word *kraus*[48] and, by analogy with the word *Haarkräusler,*[49] to consider me a *Tonkräusler*[50] or any sort of *Kräusler,* because then I would spell my name *Kräusler.* You cannot get away from the word *Kreis,*[51] and would to heaven that it will make you think of the wonderful circles in which our whole being moves and from which we cannot escape no matter how we try. The circler circles in these circles, and it may well be that, exhausted by the St. Vitus dance which he is forced to perform, disputing with the dark, unfathomable power which circumscribed these circles, having a constitutionally weak stomach, he longs to escape. And the intense

47. *Ritter Blaubart* [Sir Bluebeard] (1796), II, [scene] "Open Field."
48. "Curly."
49. "A person who curls hair."
50. "A person who 'curls' sound."
51. "Circle."

pain of this longing may again be only that irony which you, dear lady, criticize so bitterly, not considering that the healthy mother produced a son who entered upon this life like a commanding king. I am talking about humor which has nothing in common with its malformed stepbrother mockery!"

"Yes," said the Rätin, "it is precisely this humor, this changeling child of an intemperate, capricious fantasy, without shape or color, which you hard, masculine souls do not even know for whom you should expend it and which you would like to make us believe is something great and marvelous when you are planning to destroy with bitter mockery everything that we value dearly. Do you realize, Kreisler, that Princess Hedwiga is still quite beside herself at your performance, your behavior in the park? Sensitive as she is, every joke in which she sees even the gentlest mocking of her personality wounds her; and in addition to that, you chose to introduce yourself to her as a complete maniac and aroused such fear in her that she might have ended on a sickbed. Is that excusable?"

"Just as little," replied Kreisler, "as when a little Princess undertakes to impress with her little person an honest-looking stranger whom she by chance meets in her papa's park."

"That may well be," continued the Rätin. "Suffice it to say, your quixotic appearance in our park could have had serious consequences. That they were prevented, that the Princess has at least become accustomed to the idea of seeing you again, all that we owe to my Julia. She is the only one who defends you, for she believes that everything you have said and done is an outbreak of an over-strained feeling, for she herself is often subject to feelings that are sensitive and easily irritated. In a word, having recently become acquainted with Shakespeare's *As You Like It,* Julia has compared you to melancholy Jacques."

"Oh you intuitive child of heaven," cried Kreisler, as tears filled his eyes.

"Moreover," continued Benzon, "when you were improvising on the guitar and, as she told me, were singing and talking at the same time, my Julia recognized you as a sublime musician and composer. She said that in that moment a quite special musical spirit awoke in her, that, as if forced by an invisible power, she had to sing and play, and that she succeeded far better than ever before. You might as well know that Julia could not accept never seeing the strange man again, that he seemed to her to be a cheerful,

strange, musical phantom; whereas the Princess, with her peculiar, special violence, claimed that a second visit from the spectral maniac would be her death. Since the girls are otherwise one heart and soul and a disagreement has never arisen between them, I was justified in claiming that that early childhood scene was reoccurring in reverse when Julia wanted to throw into the stove a somewhat strange scaramouch doll which had been given to her, but the Princess took it under her protection and declared it her favorite."

"I will allow myself," Kreisler interrupted Benzon's speech, laughing loudly, "I will allow myself, a second Scaramouch, to be thrown into the stove by the Princess and count on the sweet favor of charming Julia."

"You must," continued Benzon, "consider the recollection of scaramouch a humorous fancy which, following your own theory, you must not misinterpret. Besides, you can well imagine that I immediately recognized you from the girls' description of your appearance and of the whole incident in the park, and that it did not need Julia's longing to see you again. Anyhow, I would have set all the people at my command searching the entire park, searching all of Sieghartsweiler, to find you, who had become so dear to me after only a short acquaintance. All inquiries had proved fruitless; I thought I had lost you; and so I was all the more surprised when you came to me this morning. Julia is now with the Princess. What a discord of emotions would arise if the girls were to find out about your arrival at this moment. I will demand an explanation of what brings you here only when it is convenient and agreeable to you to tell me, for I believed you to be installed as orchestra conductor at the court of the Grand Duke.

While the Rätin was saying all this, Kreisler fell into a deep reverie. He stared at the ground and rubbed his forehead like someone trying to remember something he has forgotten.

"Ah," he began when the Rätin was silent, "ah, that is a very silly story, scarcely worth the telling. But so much is certain, that what the Princess deigned to consider the muddled talk of a maniac is based on the truth. I was actually on an official visit when I had the misfortune to frighten the nervous little girl in the park, for I was just coming from a visit that I had paid to none other than his most Serene Highness, the Grand Duke himself, and I intended to continue this most extraordinary and pleasant visit here in Sieghartsweiler."

"Oh Kreisler," cried the Rätin, smiling a little, for she never

laughed vigorously and loudly. "Oh Kreisler, that is just another bizarre notion, which you are giving free rein to. If I am not mistaken, the Residence is at least thirty hours from Sieghartsweiler."

"So it is," replied Kreisler, "but one wanders in a garden which seems to me to be laid out in such a great style that even a Le Nôtre[52] would be amazed by it. If you do not believe in my official visit, dear lady, then you might consider that a sensitive orchestra conductor, a voice in his throat and breast, a guitar in his hand, strolling through the fragrant forest, over newly green meadows, across wildly towering rocky gorges, across narrow foot bridges, under which the forest brooks race, yes, that such an orchestra conductor, joining in as a soloist with the choruses that echo around him, can very easily wander into isolated parts of the park without intending to or wishing to. So I may well have walked into the royal park at Sieghartshof, which is but a little place in the great park that nature has laid out. But no, it was not like that! When you mentioned before how a merry band of hunters was ordered to capture me like game that has run astray, I became firmly convinced of the necessity of my presence here, a necessity which would have driven me into the net, even if I had wanted to continue my erratic course. You were kind enough to mention that my acquaintance had become valuable to you, and did this not remind me of those fateful days of confusion and universal trouble during which fate brought us together? At that time you found me unsettled, incapable of making a decision, lacerated in my innermost soul. You took care of me with friendliness, and while you tried to comfort me, disclosing the clear, cloudless heaven of a serene and balanced feminity, you both scolded and forgave the mad excesses of my actions, which you ascribed to a bleak despair occasioned by the press of circumstances. You removed me from an environment which I myself had to acknowledge as ambiguous; your house became a peaceful, friendly asylum where I forgot my sorrow while honoring yours. Your conversations, full of cheerfulness and serenity, worked as a beneficial medicine without your knowing my ailment. It was not the ominous events which could destroy my place in life which affected me so inimically. I had long wished to abandon relationships which oppressed and worried me, and I could not quarrel with a fate which effected that which I

52. André Lenôtre (1613–1700), French landscape architect. The gardens of the palace of Versailles are his most celebrated work.

myself for so long had not had the courage and strength to do. No! When I felt myself free, then the indescribable restlessness which, since my earliest years, has so often torn me took hold of me. It is not the yearning which, as that serious poet[53] says so marvelously, derived from a higher life, endures forever because it is never fulfilled, neither deceived nor cheated, but only not fulfilled so that it does not die; no—there often erupts a barren, insane desire for something that I am restlessly seeking outside of myself although it is concealed in me; a dark secret, a confused puzzling dream of a very highly satisfying paradise which even the dream is unable to name, only to surmise; and this presentiment tortures me with the agony of Tantalus. Even when I was a child this feeling frequently overpowered me with such suddenness that I would run away from the happiest games with my comrades to the forest, to the hills; and there I would fling myself down on the ground and weep and sob desperately, despite the fact that I had been the silliest and wildest of all. Later I learned to control myself better, but I cannot describe the martyrdom of my state, when in the most cheerful company of congenial and well-wishing friends, or at any artistic pleasure, even in moments when my vanity was being fed in this way or that, suddenly everything would seem miserable, vain, colorless, dead, and I would feel myself transported into a barren wilderness. There is only one angel of light that has power over this evil demon. It is the spirit of music, which often lifts me victoriously out of myself and before whose mighty voice all the sorrows of mortal afflictions are silent."

"I have always," interrupted the Rätin, "I have always believed that music affects you too strongly, even destructively; for at the performance of any excellent work your whole being seems filled with it, and at the same time all the features of your face change. You become pale and incapable of speech, you have nothing but sighs and tears and then attack with the bitterest mockery, with deeply wounding scorn, anyone who wants to say even one word about the artist's work. Yes, when—"

"Oh my dearest Rätin," Kreisler interrupted Benzon, sud-

53. See Ludwig Tieck, *Phantasus* (Berlin, 1812), 1:33: "'O no,' said Friedrich. 'Believe me, my friends. Life has a higher origin and it stands in our power to elevate it and maintain it in a way worthy of its noble birth, so that dust and annihilation may never triumph over it. Yes, there is an eternal youth, a longing which abides forever, because it is never fulfilled, neither deceived nor cheated, but only not fulfilled so that it will not die.'"

denly adopting his own peculiar and special ironic tone, although he had just been speaking seriously and with great feeling. "Oh my dearest Rätin, all that has changed now. You simply cannot imagine, my dear lady, how proper and clever I became at the Grand Ducal Court! I can beat the rhythm for *Don Juan* and for *Armida* with great tranquillity and good-nature; I, I can wave my baton to the first soprano in a friendly way when she hops around the scale singing her very remarkable cadenzas; I can even nod my head, smiling, and take a good pinch of snuff when the Court Chamberlain whispers to me after listening to Haydn's *Seasons, 'C'étoit bien ennuyant, mon cher mâitre de chapelle'*; yes, I can listen patiently to the play producer who is knowledgeable about art when he proves to me in detail that Mozart and Beethoven didn't know a damn thing about singing and that Rossini, Pucitta, and all such little people have elevated themselves *à la hauteur* of all opera music. Yes, my dear lady, you cannot believe how I profited from my position as conductor of the orchestra; but I became especially convinced that it is good for artists to have a steady position, because otherwise not even the devil and his grandmother could endure such conceited people. Let the worthy composer become a conductor or musical director, let the poet become a court writer, the painter a court portraitist, the sculptor a creator of court likenesses, and you will shortly have no more useless visionaries in the country, nothing but useful citizens of good education and gentle manners!"

"Quiet, quiet!" cried the Rätin, annoyed. "Stop, Kreisler! Your hobby-horse is beginning to buck in its usual manner. I am also very suspicious and would really like to know what dreadful occurrence necessitated your speedy flight from the Residence. All the circumstances surrounding your appearance in the park suggest such a flight."

"And I," Kreisler spoke calmly, looking the Rätin firmly in the eye, "and I can assure you that the dreadful occurrence which drove me from the Residence was not related to external affairs but lay in myself.

"That restlessness of which I spoke before, perhaps with more seriousness than was exactly necessary, overwhelmed me more violently than ever, and I could not stay longer. You know how much I looked forward to my position as conductor at the Grand Duke's. I foolishly believed that, living amid art, my position

would calm me, that the evil genius in me would be conquered. From the little that I have related about my education at the Grand Ducal Court, you will deduce, dear lady, how wrong I was. Let me forego the description of how, gradually, through the vacuous, childish playing with sacred art to which I was forced to lend a hand, through the idiocies of the soulless dabblers in art, through dilettantes without taste, through the whole crazy activity of a world peopled by puppets, I came to recognize the wretched uselessness of my existence. One morning I went to the Grand Duke to find out about my part in the festivities that were to take place during the next several days. The producer, of course, was there and assailed me with all sorts of senseless and tasteless arrangements, to which I was supposed to adapt myself. Primarily, there was a prologue that he had written which was to be the climax of the festival and which he demanded that I set to music. This time, so he said to the Fürst, casting a significant glance at me, it was not to be scholarly German music but stylish Italian singing; and so he had composed several tender melodies that I was to adapt in a suitable manner. The Grand Duke not only approved everything, but also took the opportunity of indicating to me that he hoped and expected that I would continue my training by a zealous study of the recent Italian composers. How miserably I stood there! I despised myself thoroughly—all these humiliations seemed to me to be just punishment for my childish, absurd forbearance! I left the palace, never to return. I wanted to demand my release that same evening, but even this decision could not quiet me as I saw myself already secretly ostracized. The guitar, which I had brought along for another purpose, I took out of the wagon, which I had dismissed as soon as I came outside the gate, and ran on and on without stopping, farther and farther away! The sun was already setting; the shadows of the mountain and of the forest were growing ever longer and blacker. The thought of returning to the Residence was unbearable, devastating. 'What power forces me to return?' I cried aloud. I knew that I was on the road to Sieghartsweiler; I remembered my old Meister Abraham, from whom I had received a letter the day before, in which he, suspecting my situation in the palace, wished me away from there and invited me to come to him."

"What," the Rätin interrupted the Kapellmeister, "what, you know the eccentric old man?"

"Meister Abraham," continued Kreisler, "was my father's dearest friend, my teacher, and to some extent my mentor. Now, dear lady, you know in detail how I came to the park of the gallant Fürst Irenäus, and you can no longer doubt that, when necessary, I am capable of relating a story calmly, with the proper historical accuracy, and so pleasantly that I even alarm myself. Besides, the whole story of my flight from the Residence, as I have said, seems so silly and so prosaic that I cannot even speak of it without feeling quite weak. But do, dearest lady, administer this stupid story to the frightened Princess as a sedative so that she will become calm and will realize that an honorable German musician whom Rossini and Pucitta and Pavesi and Fioravanti and the Lord knows what other *inis* and *ittas* put to flight when he had just put on silk stockings and was behaving elegantly cannot possibly behave very sensibly. I hope that I can hope for forgiveness! However, you must know, dearest Rätin, as the poetic echo of that boring adventure, that just at the moment when, lashed by my evil genius, I was about to run away, the sweetest magic held me fast. Just as my evil genius was mischievously trying to destroy the secret in my heart, the powerful spirit of music fluttered its wings; and from their melodic rustlings there awoke consolation, hope, even the yearning which is immortal love itself and the rapture of eternal youth. Julia sang!"

Kreisler was silent. Benzon listened tensely for what would follow. Since the Kapellmeister seemed to be lost in silent thought, she asked with chill friendliness, "You really find my daughter's singing pleasant, dear Johannes?"

Kreisler roused himself violently; what he was about to say was choked by a sigh from deep in his breast.

"Well," continued the Rätin, "I am very pleased. Julia can learn a great deal about true singing from you, dear Kreisler; for I now see that it is settled that you are staying here."

"Dearest lady," began Kreisler, but in that moment the door opened and Julia entered.

When she saw the Kapellmeister, a sweet smile suffused her charming face, and a whispered "ah" escaped her lips.

Benzon stood up, took the Kapellmeister by the hand, and led him to Julia, saying, "Well, my child, this is the strange—"

(M.c.)—young Ponto dashed at my latest manuscript that lay beside me. Before I could prevent him, he seized it with his teeth and immediately dashed off. At the same time he uttered a tri-

umphant laugh which should have made me suspect that it was not just childish mischief but that something more was at stake. Soon everything became clear to me.

After a few days, the man with whom Ponto was in service came to my master. As I later found out, he was Lothario, Professor of Esthetics at the *Gymnasium* in Sieghartsweiler. After the customary greetings, the Professor looked around the room and, when he saw me, said, "Would you be good enough to remove the little one there from the room?"

"Why," asked my master, "why? You have always liked cats, Professor, especially my favorite, the graceful, intelligent Kater Murr!"

"Yes," said the Professor, laughing mockingly. "Yes, graceful and intelligent, that is true. But do me a favor, Meister, and remove your favorite, for I have things to say to you which he must not hear."

"Who?" cried Meister Abraham, staring at the Professor.

"Well," continued the latter, "your cat. I beg you, ask no more but do what I ask you."

"This is strange," said my master as he opened the door of the neighboring room and called me in. I obeyed his summons but, without his noticing it, slipped back into the room again and hid myself in the bottom of the bookcase so that I could see and hear everything in the room without being observed.

"Now I would like," said Meister Abraham as he sat down in his easy chair opposite the Professor, "now I would really like to know what kind of a secret you have to reveal to me that must remain hidden from Kater Murr."

"Tell me," began the Professor very seriously and thoughtfully, "tell me first of all, dear Meister, what you think of the proposition that, assuming only physical health, but otherwise not considering innate intellectual capacity or talent or genius, a person remarkable in learning and art could be created out of every child in a very short time, in fact while he is still a boy, if given a very specially regulated education?"

"Well," replied my master, "what can I think of this proposition except that it is foolish and ridiculous? It may be possible, even easy, systematically to drum a lot of things into a child, who has the same level of comprehension as the monkey, and a good memory, which he could then recite in public; but this child must lack all common sense, otherwise his inner, better spirit would

resist such a wretched procedure. But who would ever call such a simpleminded boy, who has been fattened on all the crumbs of knowledge that can be swallowed, a scholar in the true sense of the word?"

"The world," cried the Professor violently, "the whole world! Oh, it is dreadful! All belief in the inner, higher, innate spiritual power which alone creates the scholar and the artist has gone to the devil because of that silly, wicked proposition!"

"Do not excite yourself," said my master smiling. "As far as I know, in our good Germany there has only been a single product[54] of that method of education up to now; the world spoke about him for a while and then stopped when they saw that the product had not turned out very well. Besides, the high point of that system of training occurred at a time when infant prodigies were fashionable who, like carefully trained dogs and monkeys, performed their tricks for a small fee."

"You talk like that now," replied the Professor. "You talk like that now, Meister Abraham, and one would believe you if one didn't know the hidden scamp in you, if one didn't know that your whole life is a series of the most remarkable experiments. Confess, Meister Abraham, confess. You have been experimenting quietly and in the greatest secrecy with that proposition; but you wanted to surpass that man, the inventor of that theory we were discussing. When you were quite ready, you were going to step forward with your pupil and transport all the professors in the entire world into astonishment and despair; you wanted to discredit completely the beautiful proposition, 'non ex quovis ligno fit Mercurius'![55] Now, in short, the *quovis* is there; not a *Mercurius,* but a cat!"

"What did you say?" cried my master, bursting out laughing. "What did you say, a cat?"

54. According to Ellinger, this refers to Karl Witte (1800–1883), a lawyer and Dante scholar in Berlin from 1817. While Hoffmann was writing the first volume of *Kater Murr,* Witte's father, the clergyman Karl Heinrich Gottfried Witte (1767–1845), published a two volume work, *Karl Witte oder Erziehung und Bildungsgeschichte desselben* [Karl Witte or his upbringing and the history of his education]. Ellinger has pointed out the two following quotations: "If the Divinity should give me a son, I have long since determined to create an outstanding person from him without being able to know in advance what natural abilities he possesses." And: "If my son is a healthy child, I am firmly determined to create an outstanding person."

55. "Mercury cannot be made from any old wood."

"Do not deny it," continued the Professor, "do not deny it. You have tried out those abstract educational methods on the little one in the room there; you have taught him to read and write; you have taught him knowledge so that he now ventures to play the author, even to write verses."

"Well," said my master, "that is actually the craziest thing I have ever heard of! I educate my cat! I teach him knowledge! Tell me, what dreams are rattling around in your head, Professor? I assure you that I don't know anything at all about my cat's education and that I consider it a complete impossibility."

"So?" asked the Professor with a drawl, taking a notebook out of his pocket, which I immediately recognized as the one young Ponto had stolen from me, and read:

The Desire for the Higher

What rapturous turmoil stirs within my soul?
What is the meaning of this strange commotion?
Is there in me some fanciful, bold notion
That's spurred by my great genius to some goal?

What is it in my mind that's set afire?
What burning, sweet desire in restless fashion
Is driving me to life so filled with passion?
What makes my fearful heart beat with desire?

Transported am I now to magic lands.
No word, no sigh, the tongue is firmly bound,
But hope blows in just like a breeze in spring

And frees me now from all oppressive bands.
Imagined, sensed, in greenest foliage found!
Up, up my heart and grab *it* by the wing!

I hope that each of my gentle readers will appreciate the classicism of this splendid sonnet that flowed from the depths of my soul and will admire me all the more when I assure him that it was one of the first I ever wrote. The Professor, however, out of sheer malice, read it aloud without any expression and so abominably that I scarcely recognized it myself; and I was so overpowered by a sudden anger, such as is inherent in young poets, that I was on the point of leaping out of my hidden nook right into the Professor's face and letting him feel the sharpness of my claws. But the prudent thought that if the two of them, my master and the Pro-

fessor, should go for me, I would come out the loser, made me suppress my anger with great effort, although a threatening meow unintentionally escaped from me, which would surely have betrayed me had my master not burst out again into a resounding laugh when the Professor had finished the sonnet, which almost offended me more than the Professor's incompetence.

"Ho ho!" cried my master. "Truly, that sonnet is completely worthy of a tomcat; but I still do not understand your joke, Professor. Tell me straight out what your intention is."

Without answering my master, the Professor leafed through the manuscript and read on:

Comment

Love's a rover, love's a trial;
Friendship hides in deepest shade.
Love comes rushing with a smile;
Seek for friendship in the shade.

Everywhere I look is sorrow,
Everywhere is fearful moaning.
Can the soul accept the groaning,
Does the heart want joy tomorrow?
Oft for fun I problems borrow:
Is my heart alive or static?
Could I pour words from a vial!
Though I roam a course erratic
In the cellar, roof, or attic,
Love's a rover, love's a trial.

Time will heal all sorrow's bruises
Caused by rapture's painful rages;
And in lonely, silent ages
Freed at last from amorous ruses
Health returns when life amuses.
Charming kitty, do not doodle;
Transitory is life's sorrow.
Up, my kitten, use your noodle,
Seize this moment with the poodle,
Friendship cares not for the morrow.

Well I know—[56]

56. A parody of Goethe's *Claudina von Villa Bella. Ein Singspiel* (1787–88), 1:379–82.

"No," my master interrupted the Professor's reading. "No, my friend. You really make me very impatient. You or another joker have been having fun writing verses in the spirit of a cat who is supposed to be my good Murr, and you have spent the entire morning teasing me with them. This is not such a bad joke and will delight Kreisler, especially, who will be sure to undertake a little hunt with the hounds in which you could end up being the quarry. Now lay aside your witty disguise and tell me quite honestly and straightforwardly what the real purpose of your strange joke is."

The Professor slammed down the manuscript, solemnly looked my master in the eye, and then said, "My poodle Ponto, who, as you know, has a friendly relationship with your Kater Murr, brought me these pages several days ago. Of course he carried the manuscript in his teeth, as he carries everything. However, he laid it quite undamaged in my lap and clearly gave me to understand that he had it from none other than his friend Murr. When I glanced at it, I immediately noticed the quite special, unusual handwriting; but when I had read some of it, the strange thought came to me—even I do not know how—that Murr himself must have written it. However much reason—or even experience, which none of us can avoid and which after all is reason—says that that thought is nonsensical, since cats are not capable of either writing or composing verses, I still could not rid myself of that notion. I decided to observe your cat, went up to my attic—since I knew from Ponto that your cat prowls around a lot in your attic—and removed a few roofing tiles so that I had a clear view into the dormer window. What did I see! Listen and be amazed! Your cat was sitting in the most remote corner of the attic—was sitting upright by a little table on which were pens and paper—was sitting, now rubbing his forehead and neck with his paw, then his face, now dipping his pen in the ink, writing, pausing again, writing again, reading what he had written, growling (I could hear it), growling and purring with great satisfaction. And around him were lying various books which, to judge from their binding, had been taken from your library."

"The devil you say!" cried my master, "I will check at once to see if any of my books are missing."

With that he got up and went to the bookcase. As soon as he saw me, he recoiled three steps and looked at me full of astonishment. But the Professor cried, "You see indeed, Meister. You think

the little one is sitting innocently in the next room where you locked him up, but he has crept into the bookcase to study or, more likely, to eavesdrop. Now he has heard everything and can take suitable measures."

"Cat," began my master while he continued to look at me in astonishment. "Cat, if I really knew that, denying your normal, honorable nature, you were devoting yourself to writing such distorted verses as the Professor read, and if I could really believe that you were pursuing knowledge instead of mice, I believe I would tweak your ears till they hurt or—"

A terrible fear swept over me; I shut my eyes tight and pretended to be fast asleep.

"But no, no," continued my master. "Just look, Professor, how peacefully my honest cat is sleeping and tell me whether there is anything in his good-natured expression that would indicate the secret and marvelous knavery of which you accuse him. Murr—Murr!"

My master called me, and I did not neglect to reply as usual with my prr-prr, to open my eyes, to rise and very charmingly to arch my back.

Angrily, the Professor threw the manuscript at my head, but I pretended (my innate slyness inspired me) that he wanted to play with me and, jumping and capering, clawed the papers so that the pieces flew every which way.

"Now," said my master, "now it is certain that you are quite wrong, Professor, and that your Ponto was telling you a lie. Just look how Murr is treating the poems. What poet would handle his manuscript in that way?"

"I have warned you, Meister; do what you want now," replied the Professor and left the room.

I thought the storm was now over. How greatly in error I was! To my great annoyance, Meister Abraham had professed to disbelieve in my intellectual training, and although he had acted as if he had no faith in the Professor's words, I soon realized that he was following me everywhere, cutting me off from the use of his library by carefully locking the bookcase; and he no longer allowed me to lie on his papers on his writing table.

Thus came sorrow and affliction to my boyhood. What can cause a genius greater pain than to see himself misunderstood—yes, mocked; what can embitter a great spirit more than to meet

obstacles where he expects every assistance! But the greater the pressure, the more powerful the explosion; the tighter the bow is strung, the keener the shot! Because I was barred from reading, my mind worked more freely and created from itself.

Ill humored as I was, at this period I spent many nights and days in the cellar rooms of the house, where several mousetraps were set and where many cats of different ages and rank gathered.

The most hidden relationships in life are not concealed from a fine philosophical head, and he recognizes how life shapes itself from them in thought and deed. In the cellar rooms I began to understand the reciprocal relationship of mousetraps and cats. Being a cat with a noble and true mind, I became hot with indignation when I could not help observing how those lifeless machines with their punctual actions generated great indolence in young cats. I seized my pen and wrote that immortal work which I have already mentioned, namely, *Concerning Mousetraps and Their Influence on the Mind and Capacity of Catdom*. In this little book I held a mirror before the eyes of the degenerate cat youths in which they could see themselves as they are, neglecting their own power, indolent, lazy, serenely allowing the despicable mice to get the bacon! I shook them out of their sleep with thundering words. Besides the benefit this little work provided, the writing of it was also of advantage to me, because for the time being I did not have to catch any mice, and afterwards, since I had spoken so forcefully, it could not occur to anyone that I should by deeds give an example of the heroism I had invoked.

I could now end the account of the first period of my life and turn to the actual months of my adolescence that precede manhood. But it is impossible to withhold from the gentle readers the last two stanzas of the splendid poem, "Comment," which my master did not want to hear. Here they are:

Well I know one can't escape from
Sweetest dalliance, graceful poses,
When from shrubs of fragrant roses
Love's sweet sounds drift like a phantom.
If the eye is seeking for some
Sight of pussy hither turning,
She is lurking yet awhile.
Scarce have faded cries of yearning

Pussy comes, there's no more spurning.
Love comes rushing with a smile.

All this longing, all this moping
Can indeed the mind make stupid;
But how long can little cupid
Find delight in leaping, loping.
Now for friendship I am hoping
Shone upon by Hesper's dark rays.
And the hero bold and staid,
He it is I seek on highways,
Seek in gardens, under archways.
Friendship hides in deepest shade.

(s.p.)—just on that evening in such a bright and cheerful mood such as one had not noticed in him for some time. And it was this mood that allowed the unheard-of to happen. For without jumping up and running wildly away as he usually did in such a situation, he listened calmly and even with a good-natured smile to the long and very boring first act of a dreadful tragedy which a young, aspiring lieutenant with pink cheeks and well-curled hair had written and was reading aloud with all the pretensions of the most successful poet. Even when the aforesaid lieutenant, having finished, asked him vehemently what he thought of the work, he contented himself, the mildest expression of inward delight on his face, with assuring the youthful hero in war and poetry that the advance proof of the act, the sample taste offered to the greedy, esthetic gluttons, actually contained marvelous thoughts, the originality of which was attested to by the fact that poets recognized as being great, as, for example, Calderon, Shakespeare, and the modern Schiller, had tumbled upon them. The lieutenant embraced him heartily and with a secretive expression revealed that he was considering that very evening blessing a whole company of the most select young ladies, among whom there was a countess who could read Spanish and paint with oils, with the most excellent of all first acts. With the assurance that he would be doing an uncommonly nice thing, he ran off full of enthusiasm.

"I do not understand you," said the little Privy Councillor. "I do not understand you at all today, dear Johannes, with your indescribable meekness! How could you possibly listen so calmly and attentively to that tasteless stuff! I became anxious and afraid when

the lieutenant captured us off guard, as we were not expecting any danger, and entangled us inextricably in the multitudinous loops of his endless verses! I thought that you would leap in as you often have at less provocation. But you remained calm; your face expressed pleasure; and finally, after I had become quite weak and miserable, you finished the wretch off with an irony which he was not even capable of comprehending, and you did not even say to him as a warning for future occasions that the thing was much too long and had to be appreciably amputated."

"Oh well," replied Kreisler, "oh well, what good would I have accomplished with that miserable advice! Can a pregnant poet like our dear lieutenant ever undertake any amputation of his verses? Do they not grow privately in him? And do you not know that the verses of our young poets have the reproductive capacity of squirrels, who have tails which shoot out again gaily when they are cut off at the base! But if you think that I was listening calmly to the lieutenant's nonsense, you are in great error! The storm was over, all the grasses and flowers in the little garden were raising their bowed heads and greedily drinking the nectar of heaven, which was falling in single drops from the hazy clouds. I was standing under the large, blossoming apple tree and listening to the dying voice of thunder in the distant mountains which echoed in my soul like a prophecy of the ineffable, and I was looking up at the blue of heaven which peeked here and there as if with shining eyes through the fleeing clouds! And then my uncle called that I should be good and come indoors so as not to spoil my new flowered bathrobe with the wet and not to get a cold from the damp grass. And then again it was not my uncle talking but some swindler of a parrot or a starling behind a bush or in a bush or the Lord knows where that was playing some silly prank to tease me by shouting at me all kinds of exquisite thoughts from Shakespeare as was its habit. And then it was the lieutenant again and his tragedy! Privy Councillor, make the effort to note that it was a recollection from my boyhood that led me away from you and the lieutenant. I, a boy of at the most twelve years, really stood in my uncle's little garden and had on the most beautiful calico dressing gown ever created by a cotton-print designer, and you have used your royal aromatic powder in vain, Privy Councillor, for I have smelled nothing but the aroma of my blossoming apple tree; I did not even notice the hair oil of the versifier who anoints his hair, al-

though he is never able to protect it against wind and weather with a crown, but only crams felt and leather in the shape of a regulation shako on his head. Enough, my dear fellow. Of the three of us, you were the only sacrificial lamb who offered himself to the tragic hero's infernal knife; for while I, carefully drawing in all extremities, had wrapped myself in the little dressing gown and had leaped into the much-mentioned garden with the easy agility of a twelve-year-old, Meister Abraham, as you can see, used three or four pieces of the most beautiful notepaper to cut out all sorts of amusing and fantastic figures. He too escaped the lieutenant!"

Kreisler was right. Meister Abraham knew how to cut out cardboard in such a way that although one could make nothing of the muddle of holes snipped out, if one held a light behind the cardboard the strangest figures in all sorts of groups were created by the shadow cast on the wall. Now since Meister Abraham had a dislike of any reading aloud, he particularly deeply detested the lieutenant's poetic scribblings; thus it was inevitable that as soon as the lieutenant began, he hastily seized the cardboard that happened to be lying on the Privy Councillor's table, took his little scissors from his pocket, and began an occupation that let him withdraw completely from the lieutenant's assault.

"Listen," began the Privy Councillor, "listen, Kreisler—it was a boyhood recollection which came to your mind, and I like to attribute your serenity and good nature today to that remembrance. Listen, my dearly beloved friend! It vexes me, as it does all who love and admire you, that I know nothing at all about your earlier life, that you evade the slightest question about it in such an unfriendly way that you deliberately throw veils over the past, which at times are transparent enough to tease one's curiosity with all kinds of pictures that shimmer with a strange distortion. Be frank with those to whom you have already given your confidence."

Kreisler looked at the Privy Councillor with eyes full of astonishment, like one awakening from a deep sleep who sees a strange, unknown person before him, and then began very seriously.

"On Johannis Chrysostomus[57] day—that is, on the twenty-fourth of January of the year one thousand seven hundred and

57. Hoffmann's birthday was January 24. Johannes Chrysostomus' day falls on January 27, Mozart's birthday. Hoffmann, a great admirer of Mozart, changed his name from Wilhelm to Amadeus.

something—at the hour of noon, a man was born who had a face and hands and feet. The father was just eating pea soup and in his joy he spilled a whole spoonful on his beard, at which the midwife, although she had not witnessed this, laughed so excessively that the strings of the luteplayer's instrument, on which the lutist was just playing the infant his latest mazurka, snapped from the vibrations, and he swore by his grandmother's satin nightcap that, as far as music was concerned, the little Hans rabbit[58] would remain a clumsy dabbler for ever and ever. Thereupon the father wiped his beard clean and spoke pathetically, 'He shall indeed be called Johannes, but he will not be a rabbit.' The luteplayer—"

"I beg you," the little Privy Councillor interrupted the Kapellmeister, "I beg you, Kreisler, do not slip into the kind of humor which, I may as well say it, gags me. After all, did I ask you to give me a pragmatic autobiography? Do I want anything other than a few glimpses of your earlier life before I knew you? Really, you cannot reproach me for a curiosity which has no other source than the most heartfelt affection. And incidentally, since you now appear odd enough, you will have to accept the fact that everyone thinks that only the most exotic life, some series of fabulous events, could have kneaded and molded a psychic self such as yours."

"What a gross error. My boyhood resembles a barren heath without blossoms and flowers, my spirit and emotions languishing in desolate monotony!"

"No, no," cried the Privy Councillor, "that is not true, for I know at least that on this heath there stands a pretty little garden with a blossoming apple tree that has more fragrance than my best royal powder. I mean, Johannes, that you should drag out that memory of your early boyhood which, as you just said, completely dominates your soul today."

"I would think," said Meister Abraham, while cutting the tonsure on the just-completed Capuchin monk, "I, too, would think, Kreisler, that in your present tolerable mood you could do nothing better than to open up your heart or your soul or whatever you call that little inner treasure chest and take out this and that from it. In other words, since you have revealed the fact that you ran out into the rain against the wishes of your concerned uncle and listened in a superstitious manner to the prophecies of the

58. Some form of the word *Hase* ("hare"), used figuratively for fool, is applied to Kreisler at various times. See *Hasenfuss,* note 35 above.

dying thunder, you might as well tell more about how it all occurred. But do not lie, Johannes, for you know that at least at the age when you put on your first trousers and your first pigtail was plaited, you were under my supervision."

Kreisler was about to make a reply, but Meister Abraham quickly turned to the little Privy Councillor and said: "You really cannot believe, Your Excellency, the extent to which our Johannes succumbs to the evil spirit of lying when, as so rarely happens, he tells of his earliest boyhood. At the very age when children still say 'pa-pa' and 'ma-ma' and put their fingers in the lamps, at that very age he claims to have observed everything and to have seen deep into men's hearts."

"You do me an injustice," said Kreisler in a gentle voice, smiling kindly. "You do me a great injustice, Meister! How could I possibly wish to deceive you about my precocious intellect, as conceited fools probably do? And I ask you, Privy Councillor, whether it does not happen to you that moments frequently flash into your mind from a time that many astonishingly clever people refer to as mere vegetation, admitting the existence then only of instinct, in which the greater superiority is conceded to the animals? I think that there are special circumstances here! That first awakening into clear consciousness must always remain unexplorable. If it were possible that this could happen with a jolt, I believe the fright would kill us. Who has not felt fear in that first moment of waking from a dream or from deep slumber when, aware of himself, he has to think who he is? However, without getting too involved, I simply mean that every strong psychical impression in that stage of development probably leaves a seed behind which continues to thrive with the growth of intellectual capacity; and so all the pain and all the pleasure of those dawning hours continue to dwell in us, and they are really the sweet, melancholy voices of love, which we only imagined we heard in a dream when they wakened us from our sleep, and which continue to echo in us! I know, however, what the Meister is alluding to; to nothing other than to the story of my deceased aunt, which he wishes to argue me out of, and which, to irritate him mightily, I will tell to you, only to you, Privy Councillor, if you will promise to be lenient with me for a little sensitive childish behavior. What I told you about the pea soup and lute player—

"Oh," the Privy Councillor interrupted the Kapellmeister,

"oh, be quiet. I see indeed that you want to tease me, and that is counter to all manners and decorum."

"Not at all," continued Kreisler, "not at all, dear heart! But I must begin with the lutist, because he forms the most natural transition to the lute whose heavenly sounds lulled the baby to sweet dreams. My mother's younger sister[59] was a virtuoso on this instrument, which has since been relegated to the musical attic. Serious men who know how to write and do arithmetic, and probably know even more than that, have wept tears in my presence when they even thought about the late Mamsell Sophie's lute playing; and so I am not to be blamed if I, a thirsty child, not always in control of myself, in budding consciousness without word or speech, sucked in in greedy draughts all the melancholy of the wonderful, magic sounds which the lutist let flow from her heart. That lutist by my cradle, however, was the deceased's teacher—small of stature, with rather crooked legs—called Monsieur Turtel; and he wore a very clean, white wig puffed up in front, and a red coat. I am only mentioning all that to prove how vividly the people of that time come to mind, and that neither Meister Abraham nor anyone else need doubt when I maintain that I remember sitting as a child of three on the lap of a girl whose serene eyes shone right into my soul, and that I can still hear the sweet voice that spoke and sang to me, that I still know very well how I directed all my love and tender feelings to this charming person. This, however, was my aunt Sophie, who was called by the strange nickname *Füsschen*.[60] One day I wept excessively because I had not seen my Tante Füsschen. My nurse brought me to a room where Tante Füsschen was lying in bed; but an old man, who was sitting by her, quickly jumped up and, scolding violently, led out the nurse who was holding me in her arms. Soon thereafter I was dressed, wrapped in warm shawls, and taken to a quite different house, to other people who claimed to be my uncle and aunt and who assured me that Tante Füsschen was very ill and that if I had stayed near her, I would have become just as ill. After several weeks I was brought back to my former home. I wept, I screamed, I wanted to see Tante Füsschen. As soon as I had entered that room, I pattered over to the bed in which Tante Füsschen had lain

59. Charlotte Wilhelmine Doerffer, who died of smallpox May 24, 1779, at the age of twenty-three.

60. "Little foot," "Tootsie."

and pulled aside the curtains. The bed was empty, and somebody—another aunt of mine[61] said, with tears gushing from her eyes, 'You will never find her again, Johannes, she has died and lies under the ground.'

"I well know that I could not have understood the meaning of those words, but even now when recalling that moment I tremble with the same nameless feeling which seized me at that time. Death itself squeezed me in its icy grip; its terror penetrated my soul and chilled the joy of my early boyhood. What I did, I do not know any more; perhaps I never would have known; but I have often been told that I slowly let go the curtain, stood there quietly and solemnly for a few minutes, and then, as if deeply withdrawn and thoughtful, sat down on a little wicker stool that was near me. I was also told that this silent mourning by a child inclined to the most violent tantrums had something indescribably touching about it, and that some detrimental, psychical effects were feared, since I remained in the same state for several weeks, neither weeping nor laughing, indifferent to games, not replying to friendly words, paying no attention to anything around me."

At this point Meister Abraham picked up a piece of paper that was strangely cut into zigzags, held it in front of the burning candles, and there was reflected on the wall a whole choir of nuns who were playing on strange instruments.

"Ho ho!" cried Kreisler, looking at the nicely arranged group of sisters. "Ho ho, Meister. I well know what you want to remind me about! And yet, I still firmly maintain that you were wrong to scold me, to call me a stubborn, stupid fellow who got an entire singing and playing nunnery off key by the dissonant voice of his foolishness. Had I not, at that time, the most justified claim to the most brilliant idiocies, since I had just become an adolescent? Was it not all the more wonderful that in spite of that, the long-vanished sorrow of the three-year-old boy returned with renewed strength and produced a delusion which filled my breast with all the destructive rapture of a lacerating sorrow? Did I not have to assert, and persist in it in spite of all persuasion to the contrary, that no one else was playing that wonderful instrument, called a tromba marina, than Tante Füsschen, although she had died long ago? Why did you prevent me from thrusting my way into the choir,

61. Johanna Sophie Doerffer (1745–1803), the older sister of Hoffmann's mother.

where I would have found her in her green dress with pink bows?"

Now Kreisler stared at the wall and spoke in an agitated, trembling voice. "Truly! Tante Füsschen is towering over the nuns! She has stepped on a footstool so that she can manage the heavy instrument better."

But the Privy Councillor stepped in front of Kreisler, blocking the shadow-picture for a moment, seized him by his shoulders, and began: "Really, Johannes, it would be more sensible if you would not abandon yourself to these strange fantasies and would not talk about instruments that do not at all exist, for in all my life I have never heard of a tromba marina."

"Oh," laughed Meister Abraham, throwing the paper on the table, allowing the nunnery and the chimerical Tanta Füsschen and her tromba marina to vanish quickly. "Oh, my most worthy Privy Councillor, the Kapellmeister is as always a reasonable, calm man and not a visionary or a fool,[62] as many claim. Is it not possible that the lutist, after she expired, actually devoted herself to that wonderful instrument which you can still hear and marvel at in the cloisters now and again? What! The tromba marina does not exist? Be good enough to look up the article about it in Koch's[63] *Musical Lexicon,* which you yourself possess."

The Privy Councillor did so on the spot and read aloud:

"This ancient, very simple instrument for the bow consists of three thin boards seven feet long which are six or seven inches wide at the bottom, where the instrument rests on the floor, but at the top are scarcely two inches wide and are glued together in the shape of a triangle, so that the body, which at the top has a kind of neck for pegs, becomes progressively narrower from bottom to top. One of these three boards forms the sounding board which is made with several sounding holes and strung with a single gut string. The player places the instrument at a slant in front of himself and braces the upper part of it against his breast. With the thumb of his left hand, the player touches the string on the finger board quite gently and in approximately the same way as in obtaining the flageolet tone on the violin, while the right hand strokes the string with the bow. The peculiar sound of this instrument, which re-

62. Meister Abraham uses the Old French form, *Haselant,* instead of the German form, *Hasenfuss,* the epithet associated with Kreisler.

63. Heinrich Koch (1749–1816).

sembles the sound of a muted trumpet, is produced by the special bridge on which the string rests below on the sounding board. This bridge has almost the shape of a small shoe, quite low and thin in front, behind higher and thicker. The string rests on the rear part, and when stroked its vibrations cause the front and lighter part of the bridge on the sounding board to move up and down so that a droning tone that resembles the sound of a muted trumpet is produced."

"Build me such an instrument!" cried the Privy Councillor with shining eyes. "Build me such an instrument, Meister Abraham, and I will throw my Nagelgeige[64] in the corner, not touch my euphonium,[65] but astound the court and the city by playing the most wonderful songs on the tromba marina!"

"I will do that," replied Meister Abraham, "and may the spirit of Tante Füsschen in her green silk dress come to you, dear Privy Councillor, and inspire you."

Delighted, the Privy Councillor embraced the Meister; but Kreisler stepped between them, speaking almost with irritation. "Well, if you are not greater fools[66] than I have ever been, and at the same time merciless towards those whom you pretend to love! Be satisfied that the description of the instrument, the sound of which vibrates within me, has poured ice water on my hot forehead, and speak no more of the lutist! Well, Privy Councillor, you wanted me to tell about my childhood, and as the Meister cut out the shadow pictures of that time, you were satisfied with a beautifully illustrated edition of my biographical sketches. But when you were reading the article in Koch, his lexicographical colleague

64. According to Percy A. Scholes in the *Oxford Companion to Music,* 9th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 677–78, the *Nagelgeige,* also called the nail fiddle, or nail violin, or nail harmonica, is described as follows: "In a semicircular sounding-board nails are fastened around the curve, graduated in size so as to produce the different notes. This is held in the left hand and the nails are made to vibrate by the use of a bow held in the right hand. This instrument was invented in the eighteenth century and for a time was more or less popular—probably, however, generally rather as a 'stunt' than as a means of serious music-making." The description of this instrument indicates what an appropriate one it was for the Privy Councillor whom Hoffmann treats with warmth and good humor.

65. The euphonium is a similar amusing instrument. It was invented in 1790 by the physicist Chladni and resembled the Nagelgeige, except that the nails were replaced by tuned glass rods; and instead of a bow, one played it with wet fingers.

66. *Haselanten.* See note 62 above.

Gerber[67] occurred to me, and I pictured myself a corpse lying stretched out on a table ready for a biographical dissection. The prosecutor might say, 'It is not at all surprising that nothing but musical blood courses through the thousands of arteries and veins in this young man, because that was the case with many of his blood relations whose blood relation he therefore is.' What I mean is that most of my aunts and uncles, of whom there was no small number, as the Meister knows and as you have just learned, occupied themselves with music and in addition played instruments that were rare even then and that nowadays have mostly disappeared, so that I still hear in my dreams the quite wonderful concerts which I listened to till my tenth or eleventh year. It may be that because of this, my musical talent from its very first stirrings took that direction which can be heard in my instrumental style and which is rejected as too fantastic. If you can restrain your tears, Privy Councillor, when you hear that ancient instrument, the viola d'amore,[68] being very beautifully played, you should thank your creator for a robust constitution; I, for my part, wept considerably when Ritter Esser[69] played it, and I had previously wept even more when a large, imposing man, whom clerical garb suited uncommonly well and who was another uncle, played it for me. The performance by another relative on the viola di gamba was pleasant and enticing, although that uncle, who brought me up[70] or rather did not bring me up and who knew how to play on the spinet with a barbaric virtuosity, accused him quite justly of lacking rhythm. That poor man was not a little despised by the whole family when they discovered that he had quite happily danced a minuet *à la Pompadour* to a sarabande. Indeed, I could tell you a lot about my family's musical amusements, which were frequently unique in their way; but there would appear much that is grotesque, at which you would have to laugh; *respectus parentelae* forbids my worthy relatives being exposed to your laughter."

67. Ernst Ludwig Gerber (1746–1819), court organist at Sonderhausen. His *Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler* was first published in two volumes in 1790–92.

68. Literally, "love viol," presumably because of its affecting tone.

69. Karl Michael Ritter von Esser, born about 1736, a famous virtuoso who undertook extensive and successful concert tours between 1759 and 1790.

70. Hoffmann was brought up by his uncle Otto Wilhelm Doerffer (1741–1811); but the description belongs to Hoffmann's father, Christoph Ludwig Hoffmann (c. 1736–97). See Hoffmann's letter to his brother Karl Wilhelm Philipp, July 10, 1817.

"Johannes," began the Privy Councillor, "Johannes! You are too good-natured to be annoyed with me if I touch a chord in your heart which might perhaps pain you. You are always talking about uncles, about aunts; you do not mention your father, your mother!"

"Oh my friend," replied Kreisler with an expression of the deepest emotion. "Oh my friend, just today I remembered—but no, nothing more of remembrances, of dreams; nothing of the moment which today woke all the felt but not understood pain of my early boyhood; but a peace that resembles the ominous serenity of the forest when the thunderstorm is over, came to my spirit. Yes, Meister, you are right; I was standing under the apple tree and listening to the prophetic voice of the dying thunder! You can imagine more clearly that apathetic stupor, in which I may well have continued to live for a couple of years after I lost Tante Füsschen, if I tell you that the death of my mother,[71] which occurred during this time, made no special impression on me. I do not have to tell you why my father left me or had to leave me completely to the care of my mother's brother, because you can read about something similar in many a stale family novel or play by Iffland.[72] It will suffice if I tell you that I spent a good deal of my boyhood and early youth in bleak monotony, which may be attributed to the fact that I had no parents. A bad father is always much better than a good tutor, I think; and my skin crawls when parents with a loveless lack of understanding send their children away and banish them to some educational institution where the poor things are cut and finished according to an established pattern without consideration for their individuality, which can expand fully under no one else than their parents. As far as my education is concerned, nobody in the world can be surprised that I am uneducated, because my uncle did not educate me at all but abandoned me to the caprices of the teachers who came to the house, as I was not allowed to attend school or have any acquaintance with a boy my own age which would disturb the silence of the house which my unmarried uncle inhabited with one old, dreary servant. I can only remember three separate times when my uncle, indiffer-

71. Luise Albertine Hoffmann [Doerffer], (1748–96).

72. August Wilhelm Iffland (1759–1814), an actor, director, and popular dramatist of many family comedies. Hoffmann's parents were divorced in 1778. Hoffmann lived with his mother; his older brother lived with his father.

ent to the point of stupidity, undertook a brief measure of education by giving me a box on the ear, so that I really did receive three boxes on the ear during my boyhood. I could, Privy Councillor, since I am feeling so talkative, serve you up the story of the three boxes on the ear as a romantic trefoil, but I am only extracting the middle one since I know that you are most especially intent on hearing about my musical studies and you cannot be indifferent to hearing about the first time I composed music. My uncle had a fairly extensive library in which I could browse at will and read anything I wanted to. Rousseau's *Confessions* in a German translation came into my hands. I devoured this book, which was scarcely written for a twelve-year-old boy and which could have sown the seeds of much evil in my soul. But a single one of all the somewhat dubious occurrences filled my mind so completely that I forgot all the rest. I was electrified by the account[73] of how the boy Rousseau, driven by the powerful spirit of music in him, but otherwise without any knowledge of harmony, counterpoint or any practical aids, decided to compose an opera; how he closed the curtains of his room, threw himself on his bed, abandoning himself completely to the inspiration of his imagination, how his work blossomed like a marvelous dream! The thought of this moment during which the greatest bliss seemed to have come over the boy Rousseau never left me day or night. It often seemed to me as if I were already partaking of this bliss and that it only depended on my own firm decision to fly up to this paradise, since the spirit of music stirred just as strongly in me. Suffice it to say, I finally wished to copy my model. One stormy evening when, contrary to custom, my uncle had left the house, I closed the curtains and threw myself on my uncle's bed in order, like Rousseau, to conceive an opera in my mind. However excellent the arrangements, however much I tried to attract the poetic spirit, it remained at a distance in stubborn obstinacy! Instead of all the wonderful ideas which were supposed to occur to me, a miserable song buzzed in my ears with the tearful text 'I only loved Ismene, Ismene loved only me'[74] and would not stop no matter how I struggled against it. 'Now comes the sublime chorus of the priests: "High from the heights of Olympus," ' I shouted to myself; but 'I only loved Ismene' buzzed relent-

73. *Confessions,* book 7, end of the 1742 section.

74. A popular song of the first half of the eighteenth century. Author unknown.

lessly on and on until I finally fell fast asleep. Loud voices woke me while an unbearable smell filled my nostrils and took my breath away! The whole room was filled with thick smoke, and my uncle was standing in the cloud, trampling the remains of the flaming curtain which concealed the wardrobe and shouting, 'Water! Bring water!' until the old servant brought water in great quantities, poured it over the floor, and thus extinguished the fire. The smoke drifted slowly out the window. 'Where is the wretch?' asked my uncle, as he shone a light around the room. I knew what wretch he meant and stayed in the bed as quiet as a mouse until my uncle came over and helped me up on my legs with a 'Get up at once! What does the villain mean setting fire to the roof over my head!' In response to further questioning, I assured him quite calmly that I was composing an *opera seria* in bed in the same way the boy Rousseau had done, according to his *Confessions,* and that I did not have any idea how the fire had started. 'Rousseau? Composing? An *opera seria?* Idiot!' Thus my uncle stuttered in rage and gave me the mighty box on the ear which was the second I received, so that I stopped speechless, paralyzed by fear, and in that moment, like an echo of the blow, I heard quite distinctly 'I only loved Ismene etc., etc.' From that moment on I felt a violent aversion to this song as well as to any enthusiasm for composing."

"But how did the fire start?" asked the Privy Councillor.

"Even at this moment," replied Kreisler, "even at this moment it is still incomprehensible to me how the curtain chanced to catch fire and dragged to destruction my uncle's beautiful dressing gown and three or four beautifully curled toupets which my uncle used to wear as part studies in the whole field of wig-styling. It has also always seemed to me that I received the box on the ear not for the fire, which was not my fault, but only for the composition undertaken. Strangely enough, it was only music that my uncle kept me strictly to, although my teacher, disappointed by the momentary antipathy I expressed, considered me a completely unmusical person. Otherwise, my uncle did not care about what I did or did not like to learn. Since he frequently stated his lively displeasure at the difficulty in keeping me at my music, one would have imagined that he would have been overcome with joy when, a few years later, a musical spirit stirred in me so powerfully that it overshadowed everything else; but that was not the case at all.

My uncle merely smiled a little when he noticed that I was soon playing several instruments with some virtuosity and composing many little pieces to the satisfaction of the masters and connoisseurs. Yes, he merely smiled a little and said with a sly expression when someone came up to him with words of high praise, 'Yes, my little nephew is foolish enough.' "

"But it is," interrupted the Privy Councillor, "but it is quite incomprehensible to me that your uncle did not give your inclination free rein but forced you into another career. As far as I am aware, your career as Kapellmeister is not of long duration."

"And also not far from here," cried Meister Abraham, laughing and continuing to speak while he cast a picture of a small, strangely built man on the wall. "But now I must support the gallant uncle whom many a nefarious nephew called the *O-weh-Onkel*[75]—because his given names were Ottfried Wenzel—and assure the world that if the Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler let it enter his head to become a Councillor for Foreign Affairs[76] and to torment himself with matters quite repugnant to his nature, no one was less to blame for that than this *O-weh-Onkel.*"

"Oh be quiet," spoke Kreisler. "Oh be quiet about that, Meister, and remove my uncle from the wall, because even though he looks quite ridiculous, I do not want to laugh today at the old man who has long been resting in his grave!"

"You are overcome by a quite proper sensitivity today," replied the Meister.

Kreisler paid no attention to that but said, turning to the little Privy Councillor, "You will regret having made me so talkative, since I can only serve you, who probably expect something remarkable, the ordinary things that happen thousands of times. It is also certain that it was not educational coercion, not a special whim of fate, but that it was the commonest course of events that pushed me involuntarily to the place I did not want to go to. Have you not noticed that there is someone in every family who attains a certain eminence either by a special capacity or by the happy concurrence of propitious circumstances and who stands a hero in the center of the circle, to whom the doting relatives humbly look up, whose commanding voice is heard in decisive verdicts from which no

75. "O-weh" is the German pronunciation of the initials of Ottfried Wenzel and means "Oh woe!" Actually the uncle was called Otto Wilhelm.

76. The German word is *Legationsrat.*

appeal is possible? It thus happened to my uncle's younger brother,[77] who had escaped the musical family nest and posed as a rather important person in the palace as Councillor for Foreign Affairs to the Fürst. His rise evoked an astonished admiration from his family that never abated. He was called Councillor for Foreign Affairs with solemn seriousness; and if someone said 'the Councillor for Foreign Affairs has written, the Councillor for Foreign Affairs has said thus and so,' then everything stopped in silent respect. Accustomed since my earliest childhood to think of my uncle in the palace as a man who had attained the highest goal of all human striving, I found it quite natural that I could do nothing else but follow in his footsteps. The portrait of my distinguished uncle hung in the best parlor, and I harbored no greater wish than to stroll about with the same haircut and clothing as my uncle in the painting. My tutor granted my wish; and I must have looked quite charming as a ten-year-old boy with a toupe puffed to the heavens and a small, round hair-bag, in a canary-green coat with silver embroidery, silk stockings, and a small dagger. This childish striving went deeper when I became older, for it was usually enough to inspire me with delight in the driest subject to tell me that it was a necessary one if I wanted to become Councillor for Foreign Affairs like my uncle. That art, which filled my soul, might be my life's only true direction did not occur to me at all, since I was accustomed to hearing music, painting, and poetry spoken of as mere pleasant things that could serve for diversion and entertainment. The speed with which I advanced unhindered along the course which to a certain extent I had chosen myself, due to my competence and to the support of my uncle in the Residence, did not leave me a moment to look around and become aware of the crooked course I had taken. The goal had been reached; it was no longer possible to go back when art, to which I had been unfaithful, without any warning took revenge, when the thought of a whole lost lifetime seized me with inconsolable pain and I saw myself bound by chains which seemed to be unbreakable."

"Blessed!" cried the Privy Councillor, "blessed and salutary was the catastrophe that freed you from your chains!"

"Do not say that," replied Kreisler. "The liberation occurred too late. I am like that prisoner who, when finally released, was

77. Johann Ludwig Doerffer (1743–1803), Councillor at the Supreme Court in Glogau.

so unaccustomed to the turmoil of the world, even the light of day, that he was unable to enjoy the golden freedom and longed to be back in his prison."

"That," began Meister Abraham, "that is one of your confused ideas, Johannes, with which you plague yourself and others! Go on! Fate has always meant well with you, and it is nobody's fault but yours that you cannot keep in the ordinary path but jump first to the left, then to the right. But you are probably right in regard to your boyhood; your star ruled in a special way and—"

2

The Life and Experiences of the Youth

I Too Was in Arcady

(M.c.) "It would be quite idiotic and extraordinarily strange," said my master to himself one day, "if the little grey man over there under the stove really should possess the capabilities that the Professor wishes to attribute to him. Hm-m! I would imagine he could make me rich, richer than my Invisible Maiden did. I could put him in a cage; he would have to perform his tricks for people who would gladly pay a generous fee. A scientifically educated cat means more than a precocious boy who has been crammed with homework. In addition, I could save the cost of a secretary! I must pursue this further."

When I heard my master's objectionable remarks, I remembered the warning of my memorable mother, Mina; and guarding myself well from betraying the slightest sign of understanding my master, I firmly determined to conceal my education very carefully. Therefore, I only read and wrote at night and thankfully perceived the benevolence of providence which has given my despised race many advantages over those two-legged creatures who, the Lord only knows why, call themselves the masters of creation. I assure you that I needed neither a candlestick nor an oil lamp for my studies, as the phosphorous in my eyes shines brightly in the darkest night. It is also quite certain, therefore, that my works are beyond the reproach that can be made of some writers of the old world, namely, that their products smell of the lamp.

Though inwardly convinced of the lofty superiority with

1. The first line of Friedrich Schiller's poem "Resignation" (1784), reads "Auch ich war in Arkadien geboren" [I too was born in Arcady].

which nature has endowed me, I still have to admit that everything in this world contains certain imperfections which in turn reveal a certain dependent relationship. I do not at all wish to speak of physical things, which the doctors call not natural, although they seem to me to be very natural, but only wish to remark that in regard to our psychic organism that dependence is very clearly revealed. Is it not eternally true that our flight is often hindered by leaden weights which we cannot identify, nor do we know where they come from, nor who attached them to us?

But it is probably better and more correct if I assert that everything evil is derived from a bad example, and that the weakness of our nature lies only in the fact that we are forced to follow the bad example. I am also convinced that the human race is destined to give the bad example.

Have you not, beloved kitten who is reading this, once in your life gotten into a situation that was inexplicable to you, which brought upon you the bitterest reproaches and perhaps even severe bites from your companions? You were lazy, quarrelsome, boisterous, greedy, found no pleasure in anything, were always where you were not supposed to be, were a general nuisance—in short, were a quite unendurable fellow! Be comforted, O tomcat! This wretched period of your life did not reflect your true soul; no, it was an offering to the power that guides us, copying the bad example of men responsible for this transitory condition. Comfort yourself, O tomcat, for I fared no better!

In the middle of my lucubrations I was overcome by a nausea, a nausea like a surfeit of indigestible things; and so without more ado I curled up on the same book that I had been reading and on the same manuscript that I had been writing and fell asleep. My indolence kept increasing until I no longer wanted to write any more, read any more, jump any more, run any more, or amuse myself any more with my friends in the cellar or on the roof. Instead, I felt an irresistible urge to do everything that was not agreeable to my master or my friends, to whom I must have been a great nuisance. As for my master, for a long time he contented himself with driving me away whenever I chose places for sleeping where he could not endure having me, until he was finally obliged to thrash me. I jumped on my master's desk again and again, milling around until the tip of my tail got in the big inkwell and I painted the most beautiful pictures on the floor and sofa with it. My master,

who seemed to have no appreciation for this art genre, flew into a passion. I fled into the yard, but it was almost worse for me there. A large tomcat, with an appearance that commanded respect, had been expressing disapproval of my behavior for some time. When I foolishly tried to snatch a nice tidbit which he was about to eat from under his nose, he promptly boxed my ears so many times that I was stunned and both my ears bled. If I am not mistaken, this worthy gentleman was my uncle, for Mina's features radiated from his face, and the family resemblance of his whiskers was undeniable. In short, I confess that I so exhausted myself in bad behavior that my master said, "I don't know what is the matter with you, Murr. I really think you have entered adolescence." My master was right. I was in my wretched teens, which I had to live through as do men who, as I have stated, describe this wretched condition as an inevitable stage of their development. They call this period the adolescent years, although some never emerge from them during their whole lifetime; but our species can only speak of adolescent weeks, and I, for my part, emerged suddenly, thanks to a powerful jolt which could have cost me a leg or a couple of ribs. Actually, I *sprang* out of my adolescent weeks in a violent manner.

I must tell you how that came about.

In the courtyard of my master's dwelling there stood a machine on four wheels, richly upholstered inside, called, as I later learned, an English chaise. In my present mood, nothing was more natural than my getting the urge to climb up laboriously and creep into this machine. I found the cushions in it so comfortable, so enticing, that I began to spend most of my time sleeping and dreaming on the upholstery of the carriage.

A violent jerk, followed by a clattering, a rattling, a roaring, and confused noises woke me up just as sweet visions of roasted hare drifted across my mind. Who can describe my sudden fright when I realized that the machine was moving off with an earsplitting racket, hurling me around on the cushions. My ever-increasing fear turned to despair; I risked the dreadful leap from the machine; I heard the mocking laughter of fiendish demons; I heard their barbaric voices screaming after me, "Cat—cat! Sic 'em! Sic 'em!" I fled away madly, stones flying after me, until I finally came to a dark archway and collapsed unconscious.

At last it seemed to me that I heard someone walking back and

forth above my head; and I deduced from the sound of the steps, since I had already experienced something similar, that I must be under a stairway. I was!

But when I crept out, heavens! I saw endless streets extending in all directions before me; and a crowd of people, not one of whom I knew, surged by. In addition to that, wagons rattled, dogs barked loudly; finally a troop of soldiers, whose weapons glittered in the sun, filled the street. Quite suddenly, right next to me, someone started beating on a large drum so horribly that I involuntarily jumped three yards into the air; it was inevitable that a strange fear filled my breast! I noted now that I was out in the world—in that world which I had seen from afar from my roof, often not without longing and curiosity; yes, I was in the middle of that world now, an inexperienced stranger. Cautiously I walked along the street close to the houses and finally met a couple of youths of my species. I stopped, I tried to start a conversation with them, but they contented themselves with staring at me with sparkling eyes and then sprang away. "Frivolous youth," thought I, "you do not know who it was who stepped your way! Thus great spirits walk through the world, unrecognized, ignored. That is the fate of mortal wisdom!" Expecting a greater interest from people, I jumped onto a protruding doorstep and uttered many happy and, I believed, enticing meows; but everybody went coldly by, indifferent, scarcely looking at me. Finally I saw a pretty boy with blond curls who looked at me in a friendly way and called me, snapping his fingers, "Puss—puss!" "Beautiful soul,[2] you understand me," I thought, jumped down, and approached him, purring amiably. He began to pet me; but just when I thought I could surrender completely to this friendly spirit, he pinched my tail so hard that I screamed with pain. *That* seemed to give the malicious boy real pleasure, for he laughed loudly, held me firmly, and tried to repeat that hellish maneuver. Then deepest rage seized me; inflamed by the thought of revenge, I dug my claws so deep into his hands, into his face, that he let go of me with a yell. But in that moment I also heard the shout, "Tyras—Kartush—sic 'em!—sic 'em!"; and yelping noisily, two dogs set after me. I ran until I had no more breath; they were at my heels—there was no escape. Blind with fear, I leaped through a ground-floor window so that the panes smashed and a couple of flowerpots that were on the windowsill fell with a

2. See chap. 1, note 43.

crash into the little room. A woman, who was sitting at a table working, jumped up in alarm, then cried, "Look at that dreadful beast!" and seized a stick and started for me. But my flaming eyes, my extended claws, the howl of despair which I uttered deterred her, so that, as it is stated in that tragedy,[3] the cane raised to strike me seemed to stick in the air and she stood there, a painted tyrant, neutral to his will and matter! At that moment the door opened; making a quick decision, I slipped between the legs of the entering man and was lucky enough to find my way out of the house into the street.

Completely exhausted, completely enervated, I finally came to a lonely little square where I could lie down for a bit. Then the most raging hunger began to torment me, and I recalled with deep sorrow my good Meister Abraham, from whom a harsh fate had separated me. But how to find him again! I looked sadly around; and when I saw no possibility of finding the way home, bright tears came to my eyes.

Then a new hope surged through me when I saw a friendly young girl at the corner of the street sitting at a little table on which lay very appetizing rolls of sausages. I approached slowly; she smiled at me, and since I wished to present myself as a well-brought-up young man with good manners, I arched my back more grandly than ever before. Her smile became loud laughter. "At last, I have found a beautiful soul, a sympathetic heart! Heavens, how that comforts my wounded breast!" Thus I reflected and helped myself to one of the sausages, but in that same moment the girl screamed loudly, and if the blow which she directed at me with a rough piece of wood had landed on me, I would actually never have enjoyed that sausage (no, nor any other sausage either) to which, relying on the loyalty, on the humane virtue of the girl, I had helped myself. I expended my last strength in running away from the angry girl, who pursued me. I succeeded and finally reached a place where I could eat the sausage in peace.

After this frugal meal, cheer came to my heart; and since the

3. See *Hamlet,* II, ii, 449–554:

> . . . for, lo! his sword,
> Which was declining on the milky head
> Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' th' air to stick:
> So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood.
> And like a neutral to his will and matter,
> Did nothing.

sun was shining warmly on my fur, I felt vividly that it was beautiful on this earth. But when the cold, damp night arrived, when I did not find a soft bed like the one at my good master's, and when I awoke the next morning, stiff with cold and tormented again by hunger, a sadness bordering on despair seized me. "That is the world (I broke out in loud complaints), that is the world which you longed to be in, away from your native roof? The world, where you hoped to find virtue and wisdom and the morality of higher education! Oh these heartless barbarians! In what does their strength rest but in blows? In what their reason but in mocking ridicule? In what their whole activity but in envious persecution of sensitive souls? Oh, away—away from this world full of hypocrisy and deceit! Enfold me in your cool shadows, sweet native cellar! O attic—O stove—O solitude which gladdens me, for you I yearn, my heart doth burn!"[4] The thought of my misery, of my hopeless state, overpowered me. I shut my eyes tight and wept.

Familiar sounds beat at my ears. "Murr—Murr!—beloved friend, where have you come from? What has happened to you?"

I opened my eyes; young Ponto stood before me!

However much Ponto had offended me, still his unexpected appearance was comforting. I forgot the iniquity he had done me and told him about everything that had happened to me, explained my sad and helpless situation with many tears, and ended by complaining that a killing hunger was tormenting me.

Instead of showing me sympathy as I had believed he would, Ponto burst out in strident laughter. "Are you not," said he, "are you not a complete idiot, dear Murr? First the fool curls up in a chaise where he does not belong, falls asleep, is terrified when he is carried away, leaps out into the world, and is mightily surprised that nobody knows him who has scarcely stuck his nose out the

4. Murr's ecstatic speeches are usually laced with plagiarisms. Hoffmann uses this device to point up the artificiality of Murr's emotions. Murr chants "O Einsamkeit, die mich erfreut, nach dir mein Herz, sich sehnt mit Schmerz." See Ludwig Tieck, *Der blonde Eckbert* (1797), in which the song of the bird became the *Leitmotiv* of the Romantic movement and therefore itself a subject of parody:

Waldeinsamkeit
Die mich erfreut,
So morgen wie heut'
In ew'ger Zeit,
O wie mich erfreut
Waldeinsamkeit.

door, and then gets into all sorts of trouble with his stupid tricks and is so simple-minded that he cannot even find his way back to his master. Look, friend Murr, you have always boasted of your knowledge, of your education, you have always acted very superior to me, and now you sit there, abandoned, miserable, your great intellectual capabilities not sufficient to teach you what you must do to satisfy your hunger and to find your way back to your master! And if that person who you believe is highly inferior to you does not take care of you, you will die a miserable death and no mortal soul will inquire about your knowledge, about your talent, and none of the poets who you believe are your friends will place a friendly *hic jacet* on the place where you languished away out of nothing but shortsightedness! Do you see, I too have been through school and can mix in scraps of Latin? But you are starving, poor cat, and this need must first be alleviated. Just come with me."

Young Ponto leaped joyfully ahead; I followed downcast, quite crushed by his words that in my hungry state seemed to contain much truth. But what a fright I got when—

(s.p.)—for the editor of these papers, it was the most pleasant event in the world that he got a quite fresh report of Kreisler's remarkable conversation with the little Privy Councillor. He was, therefore, in a position to bring before your eyes, gentle reader, at least a few pictures from the boyhood of that rare man, whose biography he was to a certain extent compelled to note down; and he believes that in regard to the drawing and coloring, these pictures can probably be considered quite characteristic and important. At least, after what Kreisler related about Tante Füsschen and her lute, one cannot doubt that music with all its wonderful sadness, with all its heavenly rapture, was contained in the boy's heart in a thousand veins; and therefore it is not surprising that this heart, when only slightly wounded, immediately spills out hot blood. The aforesaid editor was especially eager, was, as one usually says, quite obsessed to know about two moments in the life of the beloved Kapellmeister; namely, how Meister Abraham joined the family and how he affected little Johannes, and what catastrophe drove the honorable Kreisler from the palace and transformed him into a Kapellmeister, which he ought to have been originally anyway, albeit one must trust the eternal power which always places everybody at the right time in the right place. A good

deal has been ascertained which you, oh reader, will learn immediately.

First of all, there is no doubt at all that there was a man at Göniönesmühl,[5] where Johannes Kreisler was born and raised, who seemed thoroughly strange and peculiar in everything that he undertook. Anyhow, from time immemorial the little town of Göniönesmühl has been a true paradise for whimsical characters; and Kreisler grew up surrounded by the oddest figures, who must have made all the greater impression on him since he had, at least during his boyhood, no companions of his own kind. That man had the same name as a well-known humorist,[6] for he was called Abraham Liscov and was an organ maker, a trade he sometimes despised deeply, at other times praised to the heavens, so that one did not really know what he actually felt.

As Kreisler tells us, Herr Liscov was always mentioned in his family with great respect. He was called the most skillful artist in the world, and it was only regretted that his mad whims, his exuberant notions, kept him apart from people. A person considered it a special bit of good luck if Herr Liscov really came to him and tuned his newly felted piano. Also, there was quite certainly a lot of talk about Liscov's fantastic pranks, and this talk had a quite special effect on little Johannes so that, although he did not know the man, he constructed a quite specific picture of him in his mind and longed for him; and when his uncle assured him that Herr Liscov would perhaps come and repair the damaged piano, he asked every morning when Herr Liscov was coming. The boy's interest in the unknown Herr Liscov increased to an astonished respect when he first heard the mighty sounds of the beautiful organ in the main church—one his uncle was not in the habit of attending—and his uncle told him that no one other than Herr Liscov had built it. From this moment, too, the picture that Johannes had conceived of Herr Liscov vanished, and quite a different one replaced it. According to the boy's notion, Herr Liscov had to be a big, handsome man, with a majestic bearing; he had to speak loudly and clearly; and he especially had to wear a plum-colored coat with bright gold braid, like his godfather, the Commercial

5. The name is perhaps an anagram. Hoffmann used five letters from the city of his birth, Königsberg. See H. von Müller, *Hoffmanns Briefwechsel* (1:273, note 1).

6. Christian Ludwig Liscow (1701–60), a prominent satirist.

Councillor,[7] who was thus attired and for whose rich costume little Johannes felt the deepest respect.

One day when the uncle was standing with Johannes by an open window, a small, thin man came tearing down the street, wearing a roquelaure[8] of light green worsted, the wide sleeves of which flapped oddly in the wind. In addition, he wore a little tricorn hat crammed in a martial way on his white-powdered hair; an overly long pigtail snaked down his back. He tramped so firmly that the pavement echoed, and with every other step he beat the ground violently with the long Spanish cane which he carried in his hand. When the man came past the window, he cast a piercing glance with his sparkling black eyes at the uncle, without acknowledging his greeting. Little Johannes felt an icy chill go through all his limbs, and he felt a horrible compulsion to laugh at the man but could not do so because of a cramp in his breast.

"That was Herr Liscov," said his uncle.

"I knew that," replied Johannes, and perhaps he did. Herr Liscov was neither a large, imposing man, nor did he wear a plum-colored coat with bright golden braid like his godfather, the Commercial Councillor; but oddly enough, yes, wonderfully enough, Herr Liscov looked exactly as the boy had formerly imagined him before he had heard the organ. Johannes had not yet recovered from that strange feeling, so like a sudden fright, when Herr Liscov suddenly stopped, turned around, came clumping up the street to the window, made a deep bow to the uncle, and ran off again with a loud laugh.

"Is that," spoke the uncle, "is that proper behavior for a mature man who is not ignorant of university learning, who, as a licensed organ builder, may be reckoned with the artists, and whom the laws of the land permit to carry a dagger? Might one not imagine he had dipped too deeply in a glass early in the morning or had escaped from a lunatic asylum? But I know that he will now come and repair the piano."

The uncle was right. Herr Liscov came the very next day; but instead of undertaking the repair of the piano, he insisted that little Johannes play for him. The latter was placed on a stool piled high with books; Herr Liscov, who was opposite him by the

7. *Kommerzienrat,* honorific title for distinguished men in trade and industry.

8. A stylish coat named for the French Duke of Roquelaure.

narrow end of the piano, leaned both arms on the instrument and stared the little boy in the face, which upset him so greatly that the minuets and the arias which he played from the old music book went rather unevenly. Herr Liscov remained serious; but suddenly the boy slipped off the stool and fell under the body of the piano, whereupon the organ builder, who had jerked the footrest out from under his feet, burst into unrestrained laughter. Ashamed, the boy crawled out; but in a flash Herr Liscov sat down at the piano, took out a hammer, and hit the poor instrument unmercifully, as if he wanted to break it into a thousand pieces.

"Herr Liscov, are you mad?" cried the uncle; but little Johannes, quite indignant and frantic at the organ-builder's actions, pushed with all his might against the piano lid so that it slammed shut with a loud bang and Herr Liscov had to pull his head out quickly to avoid being hit. Then the boy cried, "Dear uncle, he is not the skillful artist who built the beautiful organ; he can't be, for he is crazy and acts like a badly spoiled boy!"

The uncle was surprised at the boy's boldness, but Herr Liscov stared at him for a long time and said, "He is indeed a curious Monsieur," opened the piano quietly and carefully, took out his instruments, and began his work, which he completed in a couple of hours without saying a single word.

From that time the organ builder showed a decided partiality for the boy. He came to the house nearly every day and was soon able to win over the boy to himself by opening up to him a bright new world, in which the boy's lively mind could move happily and freely. It was not very commendable that, when Johannes was older, Liscov encouraged the boy in all kinds of unusual practical jokes which were often directed against his uncle, who, it is true, being of limited understanding and full of many ridiculous peculiarities, gave ample occasion for them. But when Kreisler complains about the bleak loneliness of his boyhood, when he ascribes to that time his lacerated feelings which often disturb his innermost nature, it is evident that his relationship to his uncle was the probable cause. He could not respect the man who was called upon to replace his father and who seemed to the boy to be ridiculous in his person and his actions.

Liscov wanted to monopolize the boy completely, and he would have succeeded had not the boy's nobler nature resisted him. A penetrating understanding, a deep spirit, an unusually

sensitive soul—all these were the organ builder's recognized advantages. But what one chose to call his humor was not that rare, wonderful mood which is generated from a deep perception of life in all its aspects and from the conflict of hostile principles, but only a clear feeling for the unsuitable, paired with a talent for making it vivid and for the necessity to appear bizarre. This was the basis of the jeering mockery which Liscov poured out everywhere, of the malicious pleasure with which he relentlessly pursued everything recognized as unsuitable. It was this malicious mockery that wounded the boy's tender nature and prevented the closest relationship that the paternally minded friend would have otherwise effected. But it cannot be denied that the eccentric organ builder was really suited to protect and cherish the seed of the deeper humor that lay buried in the boy and which grew and prospered well enough.

Herr Liscov used to talk a lot about Johannes's father, whose most intimate friend he had been in his youth, to the disadvantage of the pedagogic uncle, who visibly stepped into the shade whenever his brother appeared in the sunlight. Thus, one day the organ builder praised the father's deep musical sense and made fun of the absurd way the uncle had taught the boy the first elements of music. Johannes, whose whole soul was filled with thoughts of the man who had been the one nearest related to him and whom he had never known, wanted to hear more and more. Then Liscov, however, was suddenly silent and stared at the ground like one lost in vital thought.

"What is the matter, Meister?" asked Johannes. "What is troubling you so?"

Liscov jerked up as if from a dream and smiled. "Do you still remember, Johannes, how I pulled the footstool out from under your feet and you slid under the piano when you had to play me your uncle's dreadful mazurkas and minuets?"

"Oh," replied Johannes, "I don't like to think about the time I first saw you. Upsetting a child gave you pleasure."

"And that child," interrupted Liscov, "was extremely rude about it. But I would never have believed then that there was such a competent musician concealed in you; and therefore, my little son, do me a favor and play me a proper chorale on the paper harmonium. I will work the bellows."

It should be added here that Liscov found great pleasure in

all kinds of remarkable games and entertained Johannes with them. When Johannes was still a child, Liscov used to bring something unusual at every visit.

If the child received an apple that fell into a hundred pieces when it was peeled or some kind of unusually shaped cake, the grown boy was gladdened now with this, now with that surprising magic trick; and the youth helped to build optical machines and to mix mysterious inks, etc. The best of the mechanical objects that the organ builder made for Johannes, however, was a harmonium with an eight-foot gedackt,[9] the organ pipes of which were made of paper and resembled the artistic construction made by the old seventeenth-century organ builder called Eugenius Casparini,[10] which can be seen in the imperial museum in Vienna. Liscov's strange instrument had a tone of irresistible strength and charm, and Johannes still insists that he could never play on it without being deeply moved and having many truly pious, religious melodies well up in him.

Johannes had to perform now on this harmonium. After he had played a few chorales as Liscov demanded, he struck up the hymn *"Misericordias domini cantabo,"* which he had composed a few days before. When Johannes had finished, Liscov jumped up and pressed him stormily to his breast, laughing loudly. "Fool, why are you mocking me with your wretched strumming? If I had not been your organ blower all this time, you would never have produced anything worthwhile. But now I am going to run away and leave you quite in the lurch, and you can find yourself another organ blower somewhere in the world who will mean as well by you as I did!" Bright tears came to his eyes. He sprang through the door, which he slammed violently. But then he stuck his head in again and spoke very gently, "It simply cannot be any other way. Adieu, Johannes! If your uncle should miss his red-flowered silk waistcoat, tell him that I have stolen it and had a turban made out of it so that I can be presented to the Grand Sultan! Adieu, Johannes!" Nobody could understand why Herr Liscov had so suddenly left the pleasant city of Göniönesmühl or why he never told anybody where he had decided to go.

The uncle said, "I have long suspected that this restless spirit would be up and away, for although he makes beautiful organs,

9. A fundamental organ stop with a flutelike quality.
10. (1624–1706), a well-known organ builder.

he does not believe in the maxim: stay home and earn your living honestly! It is lucky that our piano is in good condition; I do not think much of that eccentric man." Johannes probably thought differently, for he missed Liscov greatly and now thought Göniönesmühl a dead, dreary prison.

And so he wanted to follow the organ builder's advice and seek another organ blower in the world. His uncle said that, since he had finished his studies, he could betake himself to the palace and creep under the wing of the Councillor for Foreign Affairs and finish hatching. That is what happened!

At this point your biographer is provoked beyond all measure because just as he reaches the second moment in Kreisler's life which he promised to tell you about, gentle reader—namely, how Johannes Kreisler lost the hard-won post of Councillor for Foreign Affairs and was more or less expelled from the palace—he has just come to the realization that all the information that is available to him is scanty, insufficient, insipid, and disconnected.

It is probably sufficient to say that shortly after Kreisler had succeeded to the position of his deceased uncle and had become a Councillor for Foreign Affairs, a mighty crowned giant[11] visited the Fürst in his palace without any warning and embraced him as his best friend so cordially and so heartily in his iron arms that the Fürst lost the best part of his life's breath. There was something irresistible in the powerful man's actions and person, and so his desires had to be granted even though, as really did happen, everything should become confused and troubled. Many found the powerful man's friendship a bit embarrassing and, although not wanting to rebel, were caught in the awkward dilemma of either recognizing the excellence of that friendship or of seeking another point of view outside of the country where they might see the mighty man in a truer light.

Kreisler was among these.[12]

In spite of his diplomatic position, Kreisler had maintained a befitting neutrality, and so there were moments when he did not know what he should decide to do. In just such a moment he asked a pretty lady in deep mourning what she thought of Councillors for Foreign Affairs. She replied at great length in charming and polite

11. Napoleon I (1769–1821).

12. So was Hoffmann, who lost his position with the Prussian government for the same reason.

phrases, but finally it came out that she could not think highly of a Councillor for Foreign Affairs who enthusiastically occupied himself with art without turning to it wholeheartedly.

"Most excellent of widows," said Kreisler, "I'm off!"

When he had already put on his heavy boots and, hat in hand, had come to take his leave, not without emotion and suitable sorrow, the widow tucked in his pocket the summons to the position of Kapellmeister to the Grand Duke who had swallowed Fürst Irenäus's little country.

It is scarcely necessary to add that the lady in mourning was none other than Rätin Benzon, who had just lost her councillor,[13] since her husband had just died. Remarkably enough, it happened that Benzon, just at this time, when—

(M.c.)—Ponto frisked right up to the girl selling bread and sausages who had nearly killed me when I went up to her in a friendly way. "My poodle Ponto, my poodle Ponto, what are you doing? Look out, be careful of the hard-hearted barbarian, the bloodthirsty sausage queen!" I called after Ponto; but paying no attention to me, he continued on his way, and I followed at a distance so as to be able to dash off if he should get into danger. Having reached the table, Ponto stood on his hindlegs and skipped gracefully around the girl, who was delighted. She called him to her; he came, put his head in her lap, jumped up again, barked gaily, hopped around the table again, sniffed modestly, and looked confidingly at the girl.

"Would you like a little sausage, charming poodle?" asked the girl; and when Ponto, wriggling gaily, barked assent, to my no little astonishment she took one of the loveliest, largest sausages and handed it to Ponto. He danced a little ballet in gratitude and then hurried to me with the sausage, which he placed in front of me with friendly words. "Eat and refresh yourself, my dear fellow." After I had consumed the sausage, Ponto invited me to follow him; he would take me back to Meister Abraham.

Side by side we walked slowly along, so that it was not hard for us to carry on an intelligent conversation.

"I realize very clearly," (I began the conversation thus), "that you, beloved Ponto, understand much better than I how to get

13. Councillor is *Rat* in German, but a pun may be intended. *Rat* also means "advice."

along in the world. I would never have succeeded in touching the heart of that barbarian, which was so uncommonly easy for you to do. But pardon me! There was something in your whole behavior toward the sausage girl that my innate nature rebels against. A certain servile flattery, a repudiation of self-esteem, of one's nobler nature—no, my dear poodle, I could never force myself to be so friendly, or to exhaust myself with fatiguing maneuvers, or to beg so very humbly as you did. Even when extremely hungry or when my appetite desires something special, I content myself with jumping up on the back of my master's chair and indicating my wishes with a gentle purr. And even this is more a reminder to him of the duty he assumed to care for my needs than a plea for a favor."

Ponto burst out laughing when I said this and replied, "Oh Murr, my good cat, you may be a competent scholar and understand thoroughly all sorts of things of which I have no idea; but you know nothing at all about real life, and you would soon come to grief since you lack all worldly wisdom. First of all, you would perhaps have made a different judgment before you enjoyed the sausage, for hungry people are always more polite and amenable than sated ones. Next, however, in regard to my humbleness, you are in grave error. You know that dancing and jumping give me great pleasure so that I often do them for my own amusement. When I do perform these tricks before people, I actually do so only of my own volition; it entertains me no end that these fools think I am doing this because I wish to please them and give them happiness and joy. They believe that, even when a different intention is quite obvious. You have, beloved, just experienced a perfect illustration of that. That girl must have realized immediately that I was only interested in the sausage; and yet she was delighted that I performed my tricks for her, an unknown, as if she were a person who could well appreciate them; and it was this pleasure that persuaded her to do what I wished her to do. The man of the world has to know how to make everything which he does for himself appear as if he were doing everything for others; they then believe themselves to be greatly indebted to him and are willing to do anything he wishes. Many a man seems obliging, helpful, modest, only living for the wishes of others, and yet he has nothing in view but his own declared ego which the others serve without knowing it. What you, therefore, are pleased to call subservient flattery is nothing but worldly behavior that finds its real basis in the recognition and exploitation of other people's foolishness."

"Oh Ponto," I replied. "You are a man of the world; that is true, and I repeat that you understand life better than I; but nevertheless, I can scarcely believe that your strange tricks could give you any pleasure. I at least, was appalled by that dreadful stunt when you brought your master, in my presence, a nice piece of meat, holding it carefully between your teeth and not eating a bite of it until your master signaled you permission."

"But tell me," Ponto asked, "but tell me, good Murr, what happened afterwards!"

"Both your master and Meister Abraham," I replied, "praised you beyond all measure and gave you a whole dish of meat which you consumed with an astonishing appetite."

"Well," continued Ponto, "well, my dear cat, do you think I would have got such a large helping or even any meat if I had eaten the little piece I was carrying? You must learn, O inexperienced youth, not to disdain making small sacrifices to attain something worthwhile. I am surprised that your extensive reading did not teach you the old saying, 'Throw a sprat to catch a herring.' Paw on heart, I must confess to you that if I happened to find a whole beautiful roast alone in a corner, I would quite certainly eat it without waiting for my master's permission if I could manage to without being caught. It lies in your nature that you behave quite differently in a corner than you do in the public street. Besides, it is an axiom derived from a thorough knowledge of the world that it is advisable to be honest in small matters."

I was silent for a few minutes, considering Ponto's stated principles, and it occurred to me that I had read somewhere that each should act so that his behavior could be a guiding principle for everyone,[14] or as he would wish everyone to act toward him, and I tried in vain to bring this principle into harmony with Ponto's worldliness. It occurred to me that the friendship Ponto was showing me at the moment could probably even be harmful to me, only advantageous to him, and I expressed this thought frankly.

"Little silly," laughed Ponto, "we are not talking about you at all! You cannot help me nor cause me harm. I do not envy you your dry learning; your concerns are not mine, and if you should ever come to express hostile thoughts toward me, I am your superior in strength and agility. One leap, a good bite with my sharp teeth, and that would be the end of you on the spot."

14. See Immanuel Kant. This is a free rendering of the categorical imperative from the *Critique of Practical Reason.*

A great fear of my friend came upon me and increased when a large black poodle greeted him in the usual friendly way and the two of them, looking at me with gleaming eyes, spoke softly with each other.

My ears flattened, I crept to one side; but Ponto, abandoning the black dog, soon came leaping after me and cried, "Come along, my good cat!"

"Lord," I asked aghast, "who was that serious person, who no doubt is as worldly as you?"

"I do believe," replied Ponto, "that you are afraid of my good uncle Scaramouche. You are already a grown tomcat, and now you intend to turn into a rabbit?"

"But," I said, "why did your uncle look at me with such gleaming eyes, and what were you whispering about together so mysteriously, so suspiciously?"

"I do not wish," replied Ponto, "I do not wish to conceal from you, my good Murr, that my old uncle is somewhat morose and, as is usually the case with old people, has ancient prejudices. He was very surprised at our being together, since the inequality of our class should prohibit any approach. I assured him that you were a young man of good education and with pleasant manners who amused me greatly at times. Then he said that I could talk with you occasionally alone but that I was not to think of bringing you to a poodle assembly, since you could never be qualified for assemblies because of your small ears, which betrayed your humble origin only too clearly and which would be considered quite indecent by proper large-eared poodles. I promised that."

Had I but known at that time something about my great ancestor, Puss-in-Boots, who acquired offices and honors, the bosom friend of King Gottlieb, I could have very easily proved to my friend Ponto that any poodle assembly must feel honored by the presence of a descendant of that illustrious family, but since I had not yet emerged from obscurity, I had to endure Scaramouche's and Ponto's belief that they were superior to me. We strode on. A young man was walking right in front of us; he turned around so suddenly with a loud shout of joy that if I had not jumped aside he would have injured me severely. Another young man shouted just as loudly as he came down the street toward the first. They rushed into each other's arms like friends who have not seen one another for a long time and then strolled on in front of us, hand in

hand, until they stopped and, saying farewell, parted tenderly. The one who had been walking ahead of us watched his friend for a long time and then quickly slipped into a house. Ponto stopped; I did the same. Then a window in the third story of the house which the young man had entered was opened, and an extremely pretty girl looked out. Behind her stood the young man, and both laughed noisily while watching the friend from whom the young man had just parted. Ponto looked up and murmured something between his teeth which I did not understand.

"Why are you lingering here, dear Ponto? Don't we want to go on?" I asked; but Ponto did not move until he shook his head violently after a few minutes and then silently continued on his way.

"Let us," he said when we had reached a charming square surrounded by trees and ornamented with statues, "let us rest a while here, good Murr. I cannot forget those two young men who embraced each other so warmly in the street. They are friends like Damon and Pylades."

"Damon and Pythias," I corrected him. "Pylades was the friend of Orestes, and he faithfully put Orestes to bed in his dressing gown and served him camomile tea when the Furies and Demons pursued the poor man too rigorously. One can see, Ponto, that you are not very versed in history."

"No matter," continued the poodle. "No matter. But I know the story of these two friends very well, and I will tell it to you with all the attendant circumstances as I have heard it related twenty times by my master. Perhaps you will call Walter and Formosus the third pair next to Damon and Pythias and Orestes and Pylades. Formosus is, namely, the same young man who nearly flattened you in his joy at seeing his friend again. There, in the beautiful house with the polished windows, lives the old, enormously rich President, with whom Formosus was so able to ingratiate himself by his brilliance, his cleverness, and his dazzling knowledge, that he was soon like a son to the old man. Then Formosus suddenly lost all his cheerfulness; he became pale and sickly, sighed deeply ten times in a quarter hour as if he wished to breathe away his life; he became withdrawn, remote, and seemed unable to open his mind to anything in the world. In vain the old man pressed the youth to reveal the cause of his secret sorrow; finally it came out that he was mortally in love with the President's only daughter. At

first the old man, who probably had quite other plans in mind for his daughter than to marry her off to Formosus, who was without rank or position, was appalled; but when he saw the poor boy pining away, he gave in and asked Ulrike if she liked young Formosus and whether he had already said something to her of his love. Ulrike cast down her eyes and said that Formosus, to be sure, had not proposed to her out of propriety and modesty, but that she had indeed long noticed that he loved her because that was not hard to tell. In addition she liked Formosus quite well and if nothing else stood in the way and if her dear papa had no objections and—in brief, Ulrike said everything that a girl usually says on such occasions who is not in the first flush of girlhood and is constantly thinking, 'Who will it be who will marry you?' Whereupon the President said to Formosus, 'Lift up your head, my boy! Rejoice and be happy, you shall have her, my Ulrike!' And so Ulrike became the fiancée of the young gentleman, Formosus. Nobody begrudged the modest youth his good fortune; only one man became miserable and despairing, and that was Walter, with whom Formosus had grown up as an intimate friend. Walter had seen Ulrike several times, probably also had spoken with her, and had fallen in love with her, perhaps more deeply than had Formosus! But I keep talking about love and being in love, and I do not know, my cat, whether you have ever been in love and understand that feeling."

"As far as I am concerned," I replied, "as far as I am concerned, dear Ponto, I do not think I have ever been in love or am in love now, since I am aware that I have never been in that state that numerous poets describe. Poets are not to be completely trusted; according to what I know and have read, however, love must be nothing other than a psychical state of illness which occurs in the human race as a partial insanity so that one considers an object as something quite different from what it actually is; for example, a little fat lump of a girl who mends stockings as a goddess. But do continue, dear Poodle, your tale of the two friends, Formosus and Walter."

"Walter," (so Ponto continued), "rushed to embrace Formosus and said with many tears, 'You are robbing me of my life's happiness, but that it is *you,* that *you* will be happy is my consolation. Farewell, my beloved, farewell forever!' Thereupon Walter ran into the bushes where they were thickest and tried to shoot

himself. He failed because in his despair he had forgotten to load his pistol; he contented himself, therefore, with daily outbursts of insanity. One day Formosus, whom he had not seen for several weeks, came to him quite unexpectedly while he was on his knees and moaning horribly in front of a pastelle painting of Ulrike that hung in a frame on the wall. 'No,' cried Formosus, pressing Walter to his breast, 'I could not endure your pain, your despair; I will gladly sacrifice my happiness for you. I have renounced Ulrike, I have persuaded her old father to accept you as his son-in-law! Ulrike loves you, perhaps without even being aware of it. Woo her, I am leaving—farewell!' He was about to go but Walter held him firmly. It seemed to him as if he were in a dream; he would not believe it until Formosus took out a letter in the old President's hand in which was written, more or less, 'Noble youth! You have conquered! I release you unwillingly, but I honor your friendship, which resembles the heroism one reads about in ancient writers. Mr. Walter, who is a man with laudable characteristics and a fine, well-paid position, may woo my daughter Ulrike; if she wishes to marry him, I for my part have nothing against it.' Formosus really did go away; Walter wooed Ulrike; Ulrike really became Walter's wife. The old President wrote again to Formosus, heaping him with praise and asking if he would perhaps do him the kindness of accepting three thousand talers, not as compensation, because he well knew that there was none for such a situation, but only as a small sign of his sincere attachment. Formosus replied that the old man knew the modest nature of his needs; that money did not, could not make him happy; and that only time could comfort him for a loss for which nobody but fate, which had inflamed the breast of his dear friend with a love for Ulrike, was responsible, and he had only yielded to fate; that it was a noble deed was quite out of the question. However, he would accept the gift on condition that the old man give it to a poor widow who with her virtuous daughter was living in such and such a place in extreme poverty. The widow was sought out and received the three thousand talers intended for Formosus. Soon thereafter, Walter wrote to Formosus, 'I can no longer live without you. Return to my arms!' Formosus did and learned, when he had returned, that Walter had given up a well-paid position on the condition that Formosus, who had long wanted a similar one, should have it. Formosus really got the position and entered into a very comfortable way of life, if one excepts

his disappointment in respect to a marriage to Ulrike. Town and country were astonished at the two friends' rivalry in generosity; their deeds were seen as an echo of a by-gone, more beautiful age and were held up as an example of the heroism of which only great spirits are capable."

"Actually," I began when Ponto was silent, "actually, from everything that I have read, Walter and Formosus must be noble, powerful men who in their loyal sacrifices for each other know nothing about your famous worldliness."

"Hm," replied Ponto, smiling maliciously. "That depends! There are a few circumstances I must tell you about of which the city took no notice and which I learned about partly from my master and partly from my own observations. Herr Formosus's love for the rich President's daughter could not have been as serious as the old man believed, for during the climax of this annihilating passion, after he despaired all day long, the young man never neglected to visit a cute little milliner at night. After Ulrike had become his fiancée, he soon found that this honey-sweet miss possessed the special talent of suddenly transforming herself into a little devil at appropriate moments. Besides, he received the irritating news from an unimpeachable source that Fräulein Ulrike had had quite special experience and success in love at the palace, and then it was that the irresistible nobility seized him by virtue of which he was able to relinquish the wealthy bride to his friend. Walter, in strange confusion, had truly fallen in love with Ulrike, whom he had only seen at public gatherings in very elaborate outfits; and it was all rather the same to Ulrike which of the two were foisted on her as a husband, Formosus or Walter. The latter also really had a nice remunerative position, but he had performed such irregular actions in its administration that he expected to be fired momentarily. He preferred to resign beforehand in favor of his friend and thus save his honor by an act that had all the characteristics of noblest generosity. The three thousand talers in good securities were handed over to an old, very decent lady, who sometimes pretended to be the mother, sometimes the aunt, sometimes the servant of the pretty milliner. She appeared in a dual role in this business of the talers: first as the mother when she received the money; then, when she delivered the money and was paid a good tip, as the servant of the girl whom you know, dear Murr, since she was just looking out the window with Herr Formosus.

Besides, both Formosus and Walter have long known in what way they were outdoing each other in nobility and they have avoided each other for a long time to avoid mutual praise; and that is why their greetings today were so cordial when chance brought them together on the street."

At that moment a fearful noise arose. People ran around shrieking, "Fire! Fire!" Riders dashed through the streets. Wagons rattled. From the windows of a house not far from us, clouds of smoke and flames poured out. Ponto ran quickly on. I, however, in my fright climbed up a high ladder that was leaning against a house and soon found myself in complete safety on the roof. Suddenly it seemed to me—

(s.p.) "—headlong, quite unexpectedly," said Fürst Irenäus, "without the Court Chamberlain's questioning, without the officious Chamberlain's preamble, almost—I tell you this just between ourselves, Meister Abraham, do not spread this—almost unannounced—no one in livery in the antichambers. The idiots were playing Black Jack in the vestibule. Card-playing is a great sin. He had already come through the door when the butler, who was luckily just going by, caught him by the coat-tails and asked him who he was and how he should be announced to the Fürst. But I like him; he is quite a nice person. Didn't you say that he was once considerably more than a common, ordinary musician? Even of some rank?"

Meister Abraham assured him that Kreisler formerly had certainly lived in quite different circumstances, which had even enabled him to dine at the royal table, and that only the destructive storm of the age had driven him from these circumstances. By the way, however, he wished that the veil which he had thrown over the past might rest undisturbed.

"So," the Fürst said, "so, of noble birth, perhaps a baron—a count—perhaps even—. Well, one must not go too far with fanciful hopes! I have a weakness for such mysteries! It was a lovely time after the French Revolution when the Marquis Siegellack[15] worked in a factory, and counts were knitting nightcaps of string and only wanted to be plain monsieurs, and one had a gay time at the big masked balls. Yes, as far as Herr von Kreisler is concerned!

15. "Sealing wax."

Benzon understands such things; she praised him, she recommended him to me; she is right. By his manner of carrying his hat under his arm I immediately recognized the man of education and refined fashion."

The Fürst added some more praise about Kreisler's appearance, so that Meister Abraham was convinced that his plan would succeed. He had it in mind to push his beloved friend into the imaginary court structure as Kapellmeister and thus keep him in Sieghartsweiler. But when he spoke of that again, the Fürst replied quite decidedly that nothing at all could come of that.

"Tell me yourself," he then continued. "Tell me yourself, Meister Abraham, whether it would be possible to draw this charming man into the narrow circle of my family if I should make him the Kapellmeister and thus a minor official. I could give him a court appointment and make him my *maître de plaisir* or *des spectacles,* but the man knows music thoroughly and, as you said, is also experienced in theater. Now I will not deviate from the principle of my deceased father, may he rest in peace, who always maintained that the said *maître* must never know anything about those areas that he is appointed master of because he would be too concerned about them and be too interested in the people involved, such as the actors, the musicians, etc. Therefore, let Herr von Kreisler wear the mask of a foreign Kapellmeister and stride with it into the inner chambers of the royal house, following the example of a rather aristocratic man[16] who, some time ago, in the certainly objectionable mask of a vile actor amused the most exclusive circles with his charming antics.

"And," the Fürst called out to Meister Abraham, who was about to leave, "and, since you seem more or less to have made yourself the *chargé d'affaires* of Herr von Kreisler, I will not conceal from you that there are only two things about him that I do not like, which perhaps are more habits than real qualities. You will understand how I mean that. First of all, he stares me right in the face when I speak to him. I have quite some eyes and can glower fearfully like Frederick the Great so that not a chamberlain nor page dares to look up when, casting my dreadful glance down on him, I ask whether that *mauvais sujet* is in debt again or has eaten up the marzipan; but Herr von Kreisler, glare at him as I

16. Possibly a reference to the adventurer Alexander, Count Cagliostro, actually Joseph Balsamo (1743–95).

will, is not at all bothered by it but smiles at me in such a way that —I myself must cast down my eyes. Then the man has such a special way of speaking, answering, carrying on a conversation that one really believes that what one has said is not anything special, that one is, to a certain extent, a monst—.

By St. January, Meister, that is quite unendurable, and you must see to it that Herr von Kreisler breaks himself of these things or habits."

Meister Abraham promised to do what Fürst Irenäus asked and was again about to go when the Fürst mentioned the particular dislike that Princess Hedwiga had expressed for Kreisler and said that for some time the child had been plagued by strange dreams and delusions, and because of this the doctor was going to institute a diet of whey in the next spring. Hedwiga, namely, had gotten the peculiar idea that Kreisler had escaped from the insane asylum and that he would instigate all sorts of mischief at the first opportunity.

"Tell me," said the Fürst, "tell me, Meister Abraham, whether that intelligent man has the slightest trace of mental disorder?" Abraham replied that Kreisler was no more insane than he himself, although he sometimes acted strangely and had moods that could almost be compared to those of Hamlet but that made him all the more interesting then. "As far as I know," interrupted the Fürst, "young Hamlet was an excellent prince from an old, respected ruling family, who only sometimes had the strange idea that all the court people should know how to play the flute. It is a good idea for people of high rank to do odd things; it increases respect. That which is an absurdity in a man without rank and position is in them merely the pleasant eccentricity of an uncommon spirit, which occasions astonishment and amazement. Herr von Kreisler should carefully steer a straight course, but if he insists on imitating Prince Hamlet, that is a beautiful striving for the sublime, perhaps occasioned by his strong inclination for music. One can excuse him if he wishes to deport himself strangely at times."

It seemed as if Meister Abraham was not to get out of the Fürst's room at all today, for again the Fürst called him back when he had already opened the door and wanted to know where the Princess Hedwiga's strange dislike of Kreisler might come from. Meister Abraham told him how Kreisler had first appeared before

the Princess and Julia in the park at Sieghartshof and said that the excited mood that Kreisler had been in at that time might well adversely affect a lady with delicate nerves.

The Fürst indicated with some humor that he hoped Herr von Kreisler had not really come to the palace on foot but that the carriage had stopped somewhere along the park's long driveway, as only common adventurers are accustomed to travel on foot.

Meister Abraham said that one had in mind, of course, the example of a brave officer[17] who ran from Leipzig to Syracuse without having his boots resoled once; but as far as Kreisler was concerned, he was convinced that a carriage had really stopped in the park. The Fürst was satisfied.

While this conversation was taking place in the Fürst's room, Johannes was sitting with Rätin Benzon by the most beautiful piano that the artistic Nannette Streicher[18] had ever built and was accompanying Julia, who was singing Clytemnestra's great, passionate recitative from Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulia.*[19]

The present biographer unfortunately finds it necessary, if the portrait is to be accurate, to present his hero as an absurd person who, in regard to his enthusiasm for music, seems to the calm observer almost like a maniac. He has had to copy his extravagant language; i.e., "when Julia sang, all love's yearning pain, all the rapture of sweet dreams, hopes, desire surged through the forest and settled like the refreshing dew into fragrant flower chalices, into the breasts of hearkening nightingales."[20] Kreisler's judgment of Julia's singing, therefore, does not seem of much value; but the aforesaid biographer can assure the gentle reader at this opportunity that Julia's singing, which he, alas, himself has never heard, must have had something mysterious, something quite wonderful in it. Uncommonly reliable people, who had only quite recently had their queues chopped off, whose serenity, after they had experienced a protracted lawsuit or a particularly severe disease or a new kind of Strassburg pastry, was not the least disturbed by consorting with Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, and Spontini in the

17. See Johann Gottfried Seume (1763–1810), whose travelogue, *Spaziergang nach Syrakus,* was published in 1803.

18. (1769–1833), the daughter of the piano maker Johannes Streicher. She was herself a piano maker and the wife of the piano maker Andreas Streicher, who had fled the Karlsschule with Schiller in 1782.

19. III, ii,

20. See p. 51.

theater, such people have often assured me that when Fräulein Benzon sang, they felt quite peculiar—how, they could not say at all. A certain anxiety, which at the same time caused them indescribable pleasure, completely overpowered them; and they often reached the point of playing silly jokes and behaving like young visionaries and verse makers. It should also be added that once when Julia sang at court, Fürst Irenäus groaned audibly and, when the song was ended, walked right up to Julia, pressed her hand to his lips, and spoke tearfully, "My dearest Fräulein!" The Court Chamberlain dared to claim that Fürst Irenäus really kissed Julia's hand, while a few tears trickled from his eyes. But at the instigation of the wife of the Chief of Protocol, this statement was suppressed as improper and in conflict with the court's welfare.

Julia, commanding a full, resonant voice, pure as a bell, sang with an emotion and rapture that poured forth from the depths of her agitated soul; and therein might well be the irresistible magic which she also exerted today. The listener's breath faltered when she sang; each felt his heart contract with a sweet, nameless sorrow. Not until a few moments after she had ended did the audience express its delight in stormy applause. Only Kreisler sat there, silent and rigid, leaning back in his chair. Then he got up quietly and slowly. Julia turned to him with a glance that clearly asked, "Was it all right like that?" Blushing, she cast down her eyes, however, when Kreisler, placing his hand on his heart, whispered in a trembling voice, "Julia!" and then, with bowed head, more crept than walked behind the circle which the ladies formed.

With effort, Rätin Benzon had persuaded Princess Hedwiga to appear at this evening party where she would have to meet Kapellmeister Kreisler. She only agreed to when the Rätin seriously explained to her how childish it would be to avoid a man merely because he was not cut to a standard pattern but behaved now and then in a bizarre way. Furthermore, Kreisler had been accepted by the Fürst, and it would therefore be impossible for her to maintain her strange stubbornness.

Princess Hedwiga was so clever at twisting and turning away all evening that Kreisler, who was really inoffensive and tractable and concerned about reconciling the Princess, was unable to get near her. She knew how to counter the cleverest maneuvers with sly tactics. Benzon (who had been observing all this) was, therefore, all the more surprised when the Princess suddenly broke through

the circle of ladies and walked right up to the Kapellmeister. He was standing there so lost in thought that only the Princess's question whether he had anything to say about the applause Julia had received waked him from his reverie.

"Most gracious lady," Kreisler replied in a tone that revealed his inner turmoil. "Most gracious lady, according to the recorded opinion of famous writers, the deceased have no words, only thoughts and glances. I was, I think, in heaven!"

"Our Julia," replied the Princess, smiling, "is therefore an angel of light, since she was able to unlock the gates of paradise for you. But now I beg you to leave heaven for a minute and to grant a hearing to the child of earth that I am."

The Princess paused as if she expected that Kreisler would say something. But since he only looked at her silently with glowing eyes, she cast down her eyes and turned quickly around so that her shawl slipped from her shoulders. Kreisler caught it as it fell. The Princess stopped. "Let us," she said in an uncertain, hesitating tone as if she were wrestling with a decision, as if it were difficult for her to speak about what was in her mind, "let us speak about poetic matters quite prosaically. I know that you are giving Julia instruction in singing, and I must confess that she has improved immeasurably in voice and delivery. That gives me the hope that you would be able to improve even a mediocre talent such as mine. I mean, that—"

The Princess faltered, blushing violently; Benzon walked over to them and protested that the Princess was doing herself a great injustice when she called her musical talent mediocre, since she played the piano excellently and sang very expressively. Kreisler, to whom the Princess suddenly appeared immeasurably charming in her embarrassment, poured out a stream of friendly phrases and ended with the comment that nothing more fortunate could happen to him than if the Princess would allow him to assist her in the study of music.

The Princess listened to the Kapellmeister with evident pleasure; and when he finished and Benzon's glance reproached her for her strange shyness of this nice man, she spoke softly, "Yes, yes, Benzon, you are right; I am often a childish child!" In the same moment, without looking around, she reached for her shawl which Kreisler was still holding in his hands and which he now gave her. Even he did not know how it happened that he touched the Prin-

cess's hand. As he did so, a violent shock jolted him and it seemed as if he were about to lose consciousness.

Like a ray of light that breaks through dark clouds, Kreisler heard Julia's voice. "I am supposed, dear Kreisler," she said, "I am supposed to sing some more. I am given no respite. I would like to try the lovely duet that you brought me recently."

"You may not," interrupted Benzon, "you may not refuse my Julia, dear Kapellmeister. To the piano!"

Kreisler sat down at the piano, unable to speak, striking the first chords of the duet as if stupefied and constrained by some strange intoxication. Julia began, "*Ah che mi manca l'anima in si fatal momento.*"[21] It must be noted that this duet discussed quite simply in the usual Italian manner the separation of a loving couple, that quite naturally *sento* and *tormento* were rhymed with *momento,* and that, as in a hundred other arias of a similar kind, the *abbi pietade o cielo* and the *pena di morir* were not forgotten. Kreisler had set these words to music in great spiritual agitation and fervor, the performance of which irresistibly transported anyone to whom Providence had given a decent set of ears. The duet could take its place with the most passionate ones of its kind; and since Kreisler not only strove for the greatest possible expression of the moment and not for what was simple and comfortable for the singer to attain, it had turned out rather difficult in intonation. Julia, therefore, began shyly and in an almost uncertain voice, and Kreisler did not do much better himself. Then both voices rose on the waves of song like shimmering swans, ready to fly aloft with beating wings to the golden shining clouds, then, dying in love's sweet embrace, to founder in the roaring stream of chords until ardent sighs announced imminent death and the last *addio* burst forth in a wild cry of pain from the lacerated heart like a fountain of blood.

There was no one there whom the duet had not affected deeply. Bright tears were in many eyes. Even Benzon confessed that she had never felt anything like that even in the theater. Julia and the Kapellmeister were overwhelmed with praise; all spoke of the genuine inspiration that animated them and rated the composition higher than it probably deserved.

Princess Hedwiga's inner turmoil during the scene had been

21. A composition of Hoffmann's (1812): no. 6 of the *Sechs italienische Duettinen für Sopran und Tenor.*

noticed, although she had tried to appear calm, even to conceal any interest. Next to her sat a young snip of a court lady with pink cheeks, equally ready to laugh or weep, to whom she kept whispering all sorts of things without succeeding in getting any response except scattered words, as she feared to offend court etiquette. Hedwiga also whispered unimportant things to Benzon, who sat at her other side, as if she were not listening to the duet. Benzon, however, in her severe manner, begged the Princess to save the conversation until after the duet. Now the Princess, with a glowing face, with sparkling eyes, spoke so loudly that she drowned out the words of praise. "No doubt I will now be allowed to speak my opinion. I admit that the duet may have certain value as a composition, that my Julia sang excellently; but is it right, is it proper, that in a pleasant gathering where friendly conversation should prevail, where mutual inspiration should guide the conversation and the singing like a brook that wanders murmuring between flower beds, that such extravagant things are served up which lacerate the soul and whose powerful, destructive effect cannot be mastered? I have tried to close my ears, my heart to the wild pain of the storm which Kreisler has conjured up in sound with an art that mocks our easily wounded souls; but no one was so kind as to take my part. I will gladly expose my weaknesses to your irony, Kapellmeister, I will gladly confess that the evil impression of your duet has made me quite ill. Is there then no Cimarosa, no Paesiello[22] whose compositions are written for social gatherings?"

"Oh Lord," cried Kreisler, as his face began to vibrate from the twitching of his muscles as it usually did when his sense of humor rose in him. "Oh Lord, most gracious Princess! How completely am I, a most wretched Kapellmeister, of your kind, gracious opinion! Is it not a violation of all manners and neatness in dress to appear in society with the breast with all its sorrow, all its pain, all its rapture, without a heavy wrapping of the muslin of good manners and propriety? If all the fire departments, which set the tone everywhere, are worth anything at all, they are probably adequate to dampen the naphtha fires that try to flare up here and there. No matter how much tea, how much sugared water, how much respectable conversation, even how much pleasant chitchat one spills out, this or that wicked arsonist still succeeds in throwing a fire-

22. Both Domenico Cimarosa (1749–1801) and Giovanni Paesiello (1741–1828) were popular composers of Italian comic opera.

cracker into our hearts, and flames flare up, flare up and even burn, which pure moonlight never does! Yes, most gracious Princess! Yes, I—the most wretched of all Kapellmeisters here on earth—have blasphemed disgracefully with that horrible duet, which like a hellish firework has gone through the party with fireballs, rockets, crackers, and cannonballs and unfortunately, I notice, started fires all over. Ha!—fire!—fire!—*mordio!*—fire!—call the fire-house!—water!—water!—help! help!"

Kreisler dashed to his music case, pulled it out from under the piano, opened it, tossed musical scores around, pulled out a score—it was Paesiello's *Molinara*[23]—sat down at the instrument and began the ritornelle of the well-known, charming little aria "*La Rachelina molinara,*" with which the miller's wife enters.

"Dear Kreisler" said Julia very timidly and fearfully.

But Kreisler threw himself down on his knees before Julia and begged, "Dearest, most beloved Julia! Have pity on the honorable company, pour comfort into their hopeless spirits, sing the Rachelina! If you do not, there is nothing more for me to do but cast myself in your presence into the pit of despair, on the rim of which I already find myself, and you will in vain catch hold of the coattails of the lost *maître de la chapelle* while you kindly call out, 'Stay with us, O Johannes!' He has already departed to Acheron and is attempting very graceful leaps in a demonic scarf dance; therefore, sing my dear!"

Julia did what Kreisler had begged her to do, although it seemed with some reluctance.

As soon as the little aria was ended, Kreisler began to play the well-known comic duet of the notary and the miller's wife.

Julia's singing, both in voice and method, inclined toward the serious and the solemn; but nevertheless she had at her command a special mood when she sang comic numbers that was delightfully charming. Kreisler had learned the strange but irresistibly delightful presentation of the Italian buffo; this was almost exaggerated today, for Kreisler's voice did not seem to be the same, since it accommodated itself to a thousand nuances of dramatic expression and at the same time he made such queer faces that even Cato would have laughed.

It was inevitable that everyone shouted and roared with laughter.

23. 1788; I, iii.

Delighted, Kreisler kissed Julia's hand, which she crossly jerked away from him. "Ah," spoke Julia, "ah, Kapellmeister, I simply cannot understand your strange moods—I would like to call them exotic. I cannot understand them! This devastating leap from one extreme to the other lacerates my heart! I beg you, dear Kreisler, do not again demand that I sing something comic, no matter how charming and pretty, when I am deeply agitated, and when the sounds of deepest sorrow are echoing in my soul. I know I can do it, I can get through it; but it makes me quite faint and ill. Do not ask me to again! You will promise me, dear Kreisler?"

The Kapellmeister was about to answer, but in that moment the Princess embraced Julia, laughing more loudly and unreservedly than any lady of the court would deem suitable or responsible.

"Come to my bosom," she cried, "you most charming, sweetest voiced and giddiest of all millers' wives! You mystify all the barons, administrators, notaries in the whole world and probably even—" The rest of what she was about to say was lost in the resounding laughter into which she again broke out.

And then, turning quickly to the Kapellmeister, "You have redeemed yourself completely, dear Kreisler! Oh, I understand your leaping humor. It is exquisite, truly exquisite! Only in the conflict of the most contradictory emotions and of warring feelings does the higher life blossom! Thank you! Warmest thanks!—there—I allow you to kiss my hand!"

Kreisler seized the proffered hand, and again, although not as violently as before, a shock went through him so that he had to hesitate a moment before he could press her bare fingers to his lips, bowing with as much formality as if he were still the Councillor of Foreign Affairs. He did not even know why this physical sensation of touching the royal hand should seem to him uncommonly ridiculous. "Perhaps," he said to himself when the Princess had left him, "perhaps the Princess is a kind of Leyden bottle[24] and gives ordinary people electric shocks at her royal will."

The Princess hopped and skipped around the hall, laughed, hummed *"La Rachelina molinarina,"* and hugged and kissed now this lady, now that one, protesting that she had never been happier in her life and that she owed that to the valiant Kapellmeister. All

24. An electric condenser invented by Cunäus in 1746 in the Dutch city Leyden.

this was extremely offensive to the serious Benzon, and she finally drew the Princess aside and whispered in her ear, "Hedwiga, I beg you! What behavior!"

"I would think," replied the Princess with sparkling eyes, "I would think, dear Benzon, that we would stop being so instructive and all go to bed!—yes!—to bed—to bed!" And she called for her carriage.

While the Princess had been skipping around in frenzied joy, Julia had become quieter and sadder. Resting her head on her hand, she sat at the piano; and her evident pallor, her clouded eyes, indicated that her ill humor had intensified to physical pain.

The flashing fire of Kreisler's humor was also extinguished. Avoiding all conversation, he groped his way quietly toward the door. Benzon stepped in his way. "I don't know," she said, "what strange feeling has upset me—"

(M.c.)—to be so familiar, so homelike; a sweet aroma—even I did not know from what excellent roast—wafted across the roofs in bluish clouds, and as though from a far, far distance, in the whispering of the night wind, delightful voices murmured, "Murr, my beloved, where are you lingering so long?"

What stirs the heart like heady wine,
Arouses it with deep delight
And sends it on a heavenly flight?
Does it suspect the joys divine?
Awake, poor heart, leap boldly up!
Perform brave deeds—your time is brief.
The black and bitter hemlock cup
Is now a nectar sweet to sup
And hope revives—I smell roast beef!

Thus I sang, losing myself in the most pleasant dreams, ignoring the dreadful noise of the fire. But even up there on the roof the fearful apparitions of the grotesque world into which I had leaped were to pursue me. For suddenly one of those strange monsters that men call chimney sweeps climbed out of the chimney. As soon as that black rascal saw me, he shouted, "Scat, cat!" and threw his broom at me. Avoiding it, I jumped over to the next roof and down into the gutter. But who can describe my happy

amazement, my glad fright, when I realized that I was on the house of my valiant master. Quickly I climbed from one attic window to the next, but all were closed. I raised my voice, but in vain; nobody heard me. Meanwhile clouds of smoke swirled up from the burning house, streams of water hissed, a thousand voices shouted all at the same time; the fire seemed to be getting more dangerous. Then the attic window opened and Meister Abraham, in his yellow dressing gown, looked out. "Murr, my good Kater Murr, there you are—come in, come in, little Greycoat." Thus my master gaily called me when he saw me. I did not neglect to show him *my* happiness, too, with all the signs that were at my command. It was a beautiful, marvelous reunion that we celebrated. My master stroked me after I jumped in through the window, and the comfortable feeling made me burst out in that soft, sweet growling sound that people in laughing mockery call purring. "Ha, ha!" laughed my master, "ha, ha, my boy. You are glad to be back at home after your distant travels; you do not recognize the danger in which we hover. I would almost like to be a happy innocent cat like you who doesn't give a damn about fire and firemen and who has no furniture that can burn up, for the only movable thing which his immortal soul owns is himself."

My master then took me in his arms and went down to his room.

We had scarcely entered when Professor Lothario dashed in followed by two men.

"I beseech you," cried the Professor, "I beseech you, for heaven's sake, Meister! You are in the most imminent danger! The fire has already reached your roof. Allow us to carry out your things."

My master declared very drily that in that kind of danger the excessive zeal of friends was more destructive than the danger itself, since what was saved from the fire was usually ruined, although in a nicer way. Once, with the best of intentions, he enthusiastically threw a considerable amount of porcelain china from the window of a friend's house, which was threatened by fire, to prevent its being burned up. But he would be very pleased if they would calmly put in a suitcase three nightcaps, a couple of grey coats, and other articles of clothing, being especially careful of a pair of silk trousers, and some underwear, and if they would put his books and manuscripts into a couple of baskets, but not touch any of his

machines. If the roof should catch fire, he would then leave with his property.

"First, however," he concluded, "first, however, allow me to give some food and drink to my companion and roommate who has just returned exhausted from distant travels. After that you can pack up!"

They all laughed heartily when they realized that my master meant no one else but me.

The food tasted delicious, and the lovely hope I had uttered on the roof in such sweet, yearning tones was completely fulfilled.

When I had refreshed myself, my master placed me in a basket; he placed a small dish of milk beside me where there was room and carefully closed the basket.

"Wait quietly," said my master, "wait quietly, kitty, in your dark dwelling, for what will happen. Nip your favorite drink to pass the time, for if you jump or walk around in the room here, people will step on your tail and break your legs in the tumult of rescuing us. If we have to flee, I will carry you out myself so that you won't get lost again as has already happened. You can't imagine," my master now turned to the others, "you can't imagine, worthy gentlemen and friends-in-need, what a marvelous, intelligent cat that little grey man in the basket is. Scientific Galls[25] maintain that even trained cats, although otherwise equipped with superior organs in the brain such as the urge to kill and a taste for larceny and knavery, completely lack all sense of direction and, once they are lost, never find their way home again; but my dear Murr is a shining exception. He has been missing for a couple of days, and I was mourning his loss very deeply. He just returned today, using the roofs, as I may justly assume, as a pleasant highway. This good soul has not only shown cleverness and intelligence, but also the most loyal devotion to his master, for which I love him even more than formerly." My master's praise pleased me uncommonly; with great satisfaction I felt my superiority to my whole race, to a whole army of lost cats without a sense of direction; and I was surprised that I myself had not recognized sufficiently my quite unusual intelligence. Of course I remembered that it was actually young Ponto who led me the right way and that it was the broom thrown by the chimney sweep that brought

25. Franz Joseph Gall (1758–1828), the founder of phrenology.

me to the right roof; but at the same time I did not think I should in the least doubt my own sagacity and the truth of the praise my master had bestowed on me. As I have said, I was conscious of my spiritual power, and this feeling vouched for that truth. That undeserved praise is more pleasing and inflates the person praised more than deserved praise, as I once read somewhere or heard someone say, is probably only true of people; sensible cats are free of such foolishness, and I definitely believe that I would perhaps have found the way home without Ponto and the chimney sweep and that the two of them even confused the correct course of ideas in my mind. That bit of worldliness that Ponto boasted about would have probably come to me in another way, although the many events which I experienced with the charming poodle—with the amiable roué—gave me good material for the letters of friendship in which I clothed the description of my journey. These letters could have been printed with effect in all morning and evening papers, in all smart and candid magazines, since the brilliant facets of my ego are revealed with spirit and intelligence and would be most interesting to all readers. But I know the editors and publishers would ask, "Who is this Murr?" and if they then found out that I am a cat, even though the most outstanding one in the world, they would say with contempt, "A cat and it wants to write!" And had I Lichtenberg's[26] humor and Hamann's[27] depth—I have heard a lot of good things about them; for men, they are supposed to have written not badly, but they are dead, which, for writers and poets who want to live, is a thoroughly risky affair—and, I repeat, had I Lichtenberg's humor and Hamann's depth, I would still get the manuscript returned merely because no one would credit me with an amusing style, perhaps because of my claws. That chagrins me! O prejudice, outrageous prejudice, how you delude people, especially those called publishers!

The Professor and those who had come with him were making a fearful uproar around me which, in my opinion, was quite unnecessary for packing nightcaps and grey coats.

Suddenly a deep voice shouted from outside, "The house is on fire!"

26. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742–99), a satirical writer and physical scientist.

27. Johann Georg Hamann (1730–88), a writer who influenced Herder and the Storm-and-Stress writers.

"Ho ho," spoke Meister Abraham, "then I must be there! Just wait here, gentlemen. When the danger is real, I will come back and we can take everything."

With that, he hastily left the room.

I was really frightened in my basket. The wild racket, the smoke that was now beginning to drift into the room—everything increased my fear. All sorts of black thoughts came to my mind! What if my master should forget me, if I should die a humiliating death in the flames! I felt a particularly hateful pain in my body, which my terrible fear might have caused. "Ha!" I thought, "what if my master, false of heart, jealous of my knowledge, wishing to be rid of me and relieved of all trouble, crammed me into this basket—what if even this innocent drink—what if it were poison, which he subtly minister'd to bring me death?"[28] Wonderful Murr! Even in mortal anguish you think in iambics; you do not forget what you have read in Shakespeare-Schlegel.[29]

Meister Abraham now stuck his head in the door and said, "The danger is over, gentlemen! Do sit down at the table and drink up the two bottles of wine which you found in the cupboard, while I go up on the roof and thoroughly wet it down. But wait, first I must see what my good cat is doing."

My master came all the way in, took the lid off the basket in which I was sitting, said a few friendly words to me, inquired how I felt, asked if I would like to eat a roasted bird, to all of which I replied with several sweet meows and stretched out very comfortably. My master rightly interpreted these actions as a clear indication that I was full and wished to remain in the basket, and so he closed the lid again.

How convinced I was now of the good, friendly intentions that my master harbored for me. I ought to have been ashamed of my despicable distrust, if it were appropriate for a man of my class to be ashamed. "After all," I thought, "my dreadful fright and suspicions of disaster were nothing but poetic ecstasy which is characteristic of young, gifted enthusiasts who often make use of such emotions as an intoxicating opium." That soothed me completely.

Scarcely had my master left the room when the Professor, as I could see through the cracks in the basket, looked around at my

28. *Romeo and Juliet,* IV, iii, 24–25.

29. August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767–1845) translated seventeen of Shakespeare's plays during the years 1797–1810.

basket with a distrustful glance and then signaled to the others as if he had something important to reveal to them. Then he spoke in such a soft voice that I would not have understood a single word if heaven had not made my ears incredibly sharp of hearing. "Do you know what I would like to do? Do you know that I would like to go to that basket, open it, and stick this pointed knife into that cursed cat's throat as he sits there, perhaps even now mocking us in his arrogant self-satisfaction?"

"What do you mean?" said someone else. "What do you mean, Lothario? You wish to kill the pretty cat, our valiant master's favorite! And why are you speaking so softly?"

Speaking in the same softened voice as before, the Professor explained that I understood everything, that I could read and write, that Meister Abraham had imparted learning to me in some secret and unknown way so that I now, as his poodle Ponto had revealed to him, was doing literary work and writing poetry, and that all this would serve my roguish master for mocking outstanding scholars and poets.

"Oh," said Lothario with suppressed rage. "Oh, I see it coming that Meister Abraham, who already enjoys the complete confidence of the Grand Duke, will succeed in everything that he wants to with his miserable cat. The beast will become a *magister legens,*[30] get his doctorate, and finally, as a Professor of Esthetics, give lectures about Aeschylus—Corneille—Shakespeare! I am losing my mind! The cat will burrow in my vitals and has quite infamous claws!"

All were deeply astonished at the speech of Lothario, the Professor of Esthetics. Someone said that it was impossible that a cat could learn to read and write, since these basic skills demanded not only a dexterity of which only man is capable but also a certain mental superiority, one might say—reason, which is not even found in every man, the masterpiece of creation, much less in ordinary dumb animals.

"Dear sir," interrupted another who, as far as I could tell in my basket, was a very serious man. "Dear sir, what do you mean by dumb animals? There are no dumb animals. Often, when sunk in contemplation, I feel the deepest respect for donkeys and other useful animals. I do not understand why a pleasant house pet with natural talents could not be taught reading and writing, even why such a little animal could not become a scholar and a poet. Are

30. One who has the authority to give university lectures.

there not examples? I am not even thinking of the *Thousand and One Nights,* that excellent historical source full of pragmatic authenticity. I only wish to remind you, dear sir, of Puss-in-Boots, a cat that was full of magnanimity, penetrating intelligence, and deep knowledge."

Delighted at the praise of a cat who, as a clear voice whispered to me, was certainly my worthy ancestor, I could not help sneezing rather loudly two or three times. The speaker stopped, and all looked at my basket quite alarmed.

"*Contentment, mon cher,*" continued the serious man who had just spoken. "If I am not mistaken, dear Professor of Esthetics, you mentioned before a poodle Ponto who betrayed the cat's literary endeavors to you. That brings me to Cervantes' excellent Berganza, whose latest adventures are presented in a very interesting new book.[31] This dog is also an important example of the nature and the intellectual capacity of animals."

"But," the other interrupted, "but, my dear, beloved friend, what examples are these? To be sure Cervantes, who was a novelist as you know, speaks of the dog Berganza, and the story of Puss-in-Boots is a fairy tale, which Herr Tieck has dramatized with such vividness that one could almost commit the folly of really believing it. You mention these two poets as if they were serious scientists and psychologists, but poets are anything but that; they are downright fantasists who hatch and depict nothing but imaginary stuff. Tell me, how can an intelligent man like you invoke poets to prove what is against all reason? Lothario is a Professor of Esthetics, and it is normal that he may at times get a bit out of line, but you—"

"Stop," spoke the serious man, "stop, my dear sir, do not get so excited. Bear in mind that one may quite properly quote poets in a discussion of the marvelous and the incredible, for ordinary historians do not understand a damn thing about that. Yes, if the marvelous is to be organized and presented as a pure science, the proof of any theorem can best be taken from famous poets on whose word one may rely. I will give you the example of a famous doctor[32]—and this will satisfy you, a learned doctor—who in his scientific discussion of animal magnetism, in order to show clearly

31. Hoffmann's *Nachricht von den neuesten Schicksalen des Hundes Berganza* [An account of the latest fortunes of the dog Berganza], 1814.

32. C. A. F. Kluge, *Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetism als Heilmittel* [Attempt at a presentation of animal magnetism as a curative technique], (Berlin, 1811).

our rapport with spirits and beyond all doubt the existence of man's strange prophetic capacities, referred to Schiller and his *Wallenstein,* where the hero says, 'There are moments in a man's life,' and 'There are such voices—there is no doubt,'[33] and whatever comes next. You can read the rest yourselves in the tragedy."

"Ho, ho!" replied the doctor, "you are becoming sidetracked. You are getting into magnetism and are even capable of claiming that in addition to all the marvels that a magnetist has at his command, he could also be a schoolmaster to receptive cats."

"Well," said the serious man, "who knows how magnetism affects animals? Cats, who already have a magnetic fluid in them, as you could easily see in a moment—"

Suddenly remembering Mina, who had complained bitterly about such experiments that were tried on her, I became so alarmed that I let out a loud meow.

"By Pluto," cried the Professor, alarmed, "by Pluto and all his horrors, the fiendish cat hears us, understands us—take heart —with these hands I will strangle him."

"You are not reasonable," said the serious man. "You are really not reasonable, Professor. I will never allow you to harm in any way the cat to which I am now most warmly attached, although I do not have the good fortune to enjoy a close acquaintance. Must I really believe that you are jealous of him because he writes verses? The little grey man can never become a Professor of Esthetics, you can set your mind at rest there. Is it not clearly written in the ancient academic statutes that, because of increasing abuse, no more donkeys may attain professorships; and is not this decree also to be extended to cover animals of any kind, including cats?"

"It could be," said the Professor irritably, "it could be that the cat will be neither a *magister legens* nor a Professor of Esthetics; but sooner or later he will appear as a writer and, being a novelty, find a publisher and readers and grab good honorariums away from us."

"I see," replied the serious man, "I see no reason why the good cat, our Meister's amiable favorite, should be prevented from pursuing a path on which so many scurry around without consideration of ability and aptitude. The only rule that he should be required to observe would be to have his claws trimmed, and that

33. *Wallensteins Tod,* II, iii; and V, iii.

is perhaps the only thing we could do at once to make certain that he will never scratch us when he has become an author."

All stood up. The Professor of Esthetics reached for the scissors. One can imagine my situation; I resolved to fight with valor against the intended desecration and to mark for all time the first one who approached me. I prepared to leap as soon as the basket should be opened.

At that moment Meister Abraham came in and my fear that had been increasing to despair vanished. He opened the basket; but, still beside myself, I leapt out and dashed away from my master and hid under the stove.

"What has happened to that animal?" asked my master, looking mistrustfully at the others, who were standing around quite embarrassed and, bothered by their bad consciences, quite unable to answer.

As ominous as the situation in my prison had been, I still felt an inner satisfaction at what the Professor had said about my supposed career, just as his clearly expressed jealousy pleased me greatly. I already felt the little doctoral hat on my forehead and saw myself on the lecture stand! Would not my lectures be attended by youth thirsty for knowledge? Would any young man of good breeding take it amiss if the Professor should request that no dogs were to be brought to class? Not all poodles have such friendly intentions as my Ponto, and hunting dogs with floppy ears are not to be trusted at all, as they always begin useless quarrels with the most cultivated members of my race and with violence force them to the rudest expressions of anger such as spitting, scratching, biting, etc., etc.

How very awkward it must—

(s.p.)—would only concern the little rosy-cheeked court lady whom Kreisler had seen at Benzon's. "Please," said the Princess, "please, do me a favor, Nannette, and go down and see that someone brings the carnations to my pavilion. The servants are too negligent to arrange anything themselves." The young lady jumped up, curtsied very ceremoniously, but then flew quickly out of the room like a bird whose cage has been opened.

"I cannot," said the Princess, turning to Kreisler, "I cannot make a sound unless I am alone with my teacher, who represents a father confessor to whom one can confide all one's sins without

being shy. Besides, dear Kreisler, you will find the formal etiquette here strange and burdensome since I must always be surrounded by ladies of the court, guarded like the Queen of Spain. One should at least enjoy more freedom at beautiful Sieghartshof. If the Fürst had been at the palace, I would not have dared to send Nannette away, who is just as bored with my music lessons as she is embarrassing to me. Let us begin again; it will go better now." Kreisler, who was patience itself during a lesson, again began the vocal piece which the Princess had undertaken to study; but no matter how much Hedwiga tried and no matter how much Kreisler was able to help her, she made mistakes in the beat and the tone; she made mistake after mistake until she jumped up, her whole face scarlet, ran to the window and looked out into the park. Kreisler thought he could see that the Princess was weeping violently and found his first lesson somewhat painful. What better could he do than test whether the hostile, unmusical spirit which seemed to trouble the Princess could be exorcised by music. He let flow all sorts of pleasant melodies, played variations of the best-known popular songs with contrapuntal turns and sugary ornaments until at last he was surprised at how charmingly he could play the piano and quite forgot the Princess along with her aria and her inconsiderate impatience.

"How marvelous the Geierstein is in the glowing sunset," said the Princess without turning around.

Kreisler was just striking a dissonant chord which he naturally had to resolve and therefore could not admire the Geierstein and the setting sun with the Princess. "Is there anywhere far and wide a more charming spot than our Sieghartshof?" asked Hedwiga, more loudly and emphatically than before. Now Kreisler had to join the Princess at the window after he had struck a mighty, final chord, politely complying with her summons to talk.

"Truly," said the Kapellmeister, "truly, gracious Princess, the park is delightful, and I am especially glad that all the trees have green leaves; in fact, I admire and respect all trees and bushes and grass for being green, and every spring I thank the Almighty that everything has become green again and not red, which would be very wrong in any landscape and is certainly never seen in the best landscapes, as, for example, in those by Claude Lorrain[34] or

34. Claude Lorrain, actually Claude Gellée, (1600–82), French landscape painter.

Berghem[35] or even by Hackert,[36] who only powders his meadows a little."

Kreisler was about to continue talking, but when he saw the Princess's deathly pale, strangely contorted face in the little mirror that was attached to the side of the window, he was silenced by her expression of horror which chilled his heart.

The Princess finally broke the silence without turning around, staring steadily out, and said in a moving tone of very deep sadness, "Kreisler, fate seems to wish me to appear to you as if plagued by strange ideas, excited, I might say foolish, and to provide you with material for you to practice your cutting humor on. It is time to explain to you why it is the sight of you puts me in a state that can be compared to a nerve-shattering attack of a violent fever. You must learn everything. A candid confession will relieve my heart and make it possible for me to endure your presence. When I met you in the park for the first time, your whole behavior filled me with the deepest horror, why I did not know—but it was a recollection from my earliest childhood which loomed in me in all its horror and which only later clearly shaped itself in a strange dream. There was a painter at our court called Ettlinger whom the Fürst and Fürstin held in high regard since his talent was remarkable. You can find excellent portraits by his hand in the gallery; in all of them you will see the Fürstin as this or that figure in a historical group. However, the painting which arouses the greatest admiration of connoisseurs hangs in the Fürst's cabinet. It is a portrait of the Fürstin which he painted of her when she was in the bloom of youth. Although she never sat for him, it is as like her as if he had stolen the picture from her mirror. Leonard, as the painter was called at court, must have been a mild, good man. All the love of which my childish heart was capable—I could scarcely have been three years old—I directed toward him, and I never wanted him to leave me. He played with me untiringly, painted small, gay pictures, and cut out all sorts of little figures for me. Suddenly—possibly a year had passed—he stopped coming. The woman to whom was entrusted my early upbringing told me with tears in her eyes that Herr Leonard had died. I was inconsolable; I did not wish to remain any longer in the room where Leonard had played with me. As soon as I could, I slipped away from my nurse

35. Claes Pietersz Berghem (1620–83), Dutch landscape painter.
36. Jakob Philipp Hackert (1737–1807), German landscape painter.

and the ladies-in-waiting and ran around in the palace, shouting loudly the name "Leonard!" For I kept thinking that it was not true that he had died and that he was hidden somewhere in the palace. It happened one evening, when my nurse left for a moment, that I slipped out of the room to look for the Fürstin. I wanted her to tell me where Herr Leonard was and to bring him back to me. The corridor doors were open, and so I really made my way to the main staircase, which I ran up, and went into the first room I chanced upon. As I was looking around, someone flung open the door that led, as I thought, to the Fürstin's rooms and on which I was about to knock, and a man with torn clothes and tangled hair dashed in. It was Leonard who stared at me with fearfully sparkling eyes. His face was deathly pale, sunken, scarcely recognizable. 'Oh, Herr Leonard!' I cried. 'You look awful! Why are you so pale? Why do you have such glowing eyes? Why do you stare at me so? I am afraid of you! Oh, be nice as before—paint me pretty, gay pictures again!' Then Leonard sprang at me with a wild whinnying laugh—a chain, that seemed attached to his body, clattered—he crouched on the floor and spoke in a hoarse voice. 'Ha, ha, little Princess—pretty pictures? Yes, now I can really paint, paint—now I will paint you a picture, and your beautiful mother —you have a beautiful mother, don't you? But ask her not to transform me again. I do not want to be the miserable man Leonard Ettlinger—he died long ago. I am the red vulture and I can paint when I have eaten rays of color. Yes, I can paint when I have the hot blood of the heart for paint—and I need your heart's blood, little Princess.' And then he seized me, pulled me to him, bared my neck, and it seemed to me that I saw a little knife flashing in his hand. At the penetrating scream of fear that burst from me, servants dashed in and threw themselves on the maniac. But he knocked them down with tremendous strength. At the same moment a large, strong man came bounding up the stairs and into the room with a loud cry. 'Jesus, he got away from me! Jesus, what bad luck! Just wait, you devil!' As soon as the maniac saw this man, all his strength seemed suddenly to desert him, and he fell to the floor howling. They put him in chains, which they had brought, and led him away as he uttered horrible sounds like those of a captured wild animal.

"You can imagine with what destructive force this dreadful scene affected the four-year-old child. They tried to comfort me, to

make comprehensible to me what insanity was. Although not quite understanding, a deep, nameless horror entered my soul which always returns when I see a maniac, yes, even when I only think of that terrible condition that can be compared to a perpetual death agony. You resemble that unfortunate man, Kreisler, as closely as if you were his brother. Your expression, particularly, which I might often enough call strange, reminds me only too vividly of Leonard; and it was that which destroyed my composure when I saw you for the first time and which still disturbs me—frightens me—in your presence."

Kreisler stood, deeply shaken, incapable of speech. He had always had the fixed notion that insanity was lurking near him, like a wild beast thirsting for its prey, and that it would sometime suddenly tear him to pieces. He trembled now with the same horror of himself that had seized the Princess at his appearance and wrestled with the fearful thought that it had been he who had insanely wished to murder the Princess.

After several moments of silence the Princess continued. "The unfortunate Leonard secretly loved my mother, and this love, itself insanity, burst forth as raving and madness."

"So," replied Kreisler very gently and mildly as was his habit when the storm in him had ended. "So, the artist's love had not awakened in Leonard's breast."

"What do you mean by that, Kreisler?" asked the Princess as she quickly turned around.

"Once," replied Kreisler smiling gently, "once, when I heard a clown of a servant in a rather madly humorous play honor the actors with the charming address, 'You good people and bad musicians,' like the judge of the world, I quickly divided people into two different groups, one of which consisted of the good people who are bad musicians, or rather none at all, the other one of the real musicians. No one was to be damned, but all were to be blessed in different ways. The good people fall lightly in love with a pair of pretty eyes, stretch out their arms toward the charming person in whose visage said eyes sparkle, enclose the charming girl in a circle that, becoming narrower and narrower, finally squeezes together to form an engagement ring which they put on the beloved's finger as *pars pro toto*—you understand a little Latin, gracious Princess—as *pars pro toto,* I say, as a link of the chain by which they lead home those captured in love to the marriage

prison. All the while they shriek 'Oh Lord!' or 'Oh Heavens!' or, if they are devoted to astronomy, 'Oh ye stars!' or, if they are inclined to paganism, 'Oh ye gods, she is mine! The loveliest girl! All my yearning hopes are fulfilled!' By making this kind of racket, the good people think they are imitating the musicians, but in vain, since the love of the latter is quite different. What indeed happens is that invisible hands suddenly snatch away from said musicians the veil which covered their eyes, and they see wandering on the earth the angelic image which resided in their heart as a sweet unfathomed mystery. And then all the rapture, all the ineffable bliss of the higher life which arises from the soul flares up in a pure, divine flame which only shines and warms without annihilating with destructive flames; and the mind extends a thousand feelers in fervent yearning and enmeshes the one he has seen, and he has her and never has her, since desire endures unquenched forever. And it is *she, she* herself, the glorious woman who, the embodiment of presentiment, shines forth from the artist's soul as melody—picture—poem! Gracious lady, believe me, be persuaded that true musicians who do nothing with their arms and hands other than make halfway decent music, be it with a pen, with a paintbrush, or anything else, reach out toward the beloved one only spiritual feelers on which are neither hands nor fingers that could gracefully pick up an engagement ring and place it on the little finger of the adored girl; therefore, stupid mesalliances are not to be feared at all, and it seems rather unimportant whether the loved one who lives in the artist's heart is a princess or a baker's daughter, just so long as the latter is not a silly owl.[37] The aforesaid musicians, if they fall in love, create marvelous works with the inspiration of heaven, and they neither die miserably of tuberculosis nor become insane. I really blame Herr Leonard Ettlinger for becoming insane; like the true musicians, he ought to have been able to love the serene Fürstin as much as he wished without any injury!"

The humorous tone which the Kapellmeister struck passed the Princess's ear unheard or perhaps was drowned out by the echo of the chord which he struck and which, drawn taut, vibrated more strongly in the womanly breast than did the others.

"The love of the artist," she murmured, sinking into a com-

37. *Hamlet,* IV, v, 42; Ophelia: "They say the owl was a baker's daughter."

fortable choir and resting her head on her hands as if in meditation. "The love of the artist! To be loved in such a manner! Oh, it is heaven's beautiful, lovely dream—only a dream, an empty dream—"

"You seem," interrupted Kreisler, "you seem, Your Highness, not to be very interested in dreams, and yet it is really in dreams that we grow butterfly wings so that we can escape the narrowest, tightest prison and shining brightly fly up to the sky, to the highest sky. Every man really has an innate inclination to fly, and I have known serious, respectable people who in the late evening merely fill themselves with champagne as a gas useful for ascending to the heights as balloon and passenger at the same time."

"To know one's self loved like that," repeated the Princess, more moved than ever.

"And," continued Kreisler when the Princess remained silent, "and, in regard to the love of the artist as I have tried to describe it, you have indeed, Your Highness, the bad example of Herr Leonard Ettlinger before you, who was a musician and wished to love as the good people do, whose mind became unhinged thereby; but therefore, I think, Herr Leonard was not a true musician. These carry their chosen lady in their hearts and wish only to sing, to write poetry, and to paint for her and are comparable to the gallant knights of old in matters of *courtoisie* and in regard to their innocent convictions are preferable because they do not go out questing as the knights of old did in a bloodthirsty manner—who, if there were not any giants or dragons available, knocked all sorts of estimable people in the dust to pay homage to their ladies."

"No!" cried the Princess, as if awakening from a dream. "No, it is impossible that in the heart of man such a pure vestal fire could burn! What is the love of man other than a treacherous weapon which he uses to celebrate the victory which destroys the woman without making him happy."

Kreisler was about to wonder at such strange thoughts in a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old Princess, when the door opened and Prince Ignatius came in.

The Kapellmeister was happy to end a conversation which he aptly compared to a well-arranged duet in which each voice must remain true to its own peculiar character. While the Princess, he claimed, persevered in a sad adagio and only occasionally added a

mordent, an ornamental trill, he joined in as an excellent buffo and comic chanteur with a whole legion of short notes; and since the whole piece was such a first-rate production, he only wished he could listen to himself and the Princess from a box or some suitable stall.

Prince Ignatius came in, as stated, with a broken cup in his hand, weeping and sobbing.

It must be said that the Prince, although in his late twenties, was unable to leave his childhood games. He especially loved beautiful cups which he could play with for hours at a time, arranging them and rearranging them in rows on a table, so that sometimes the yellow cups were next to the red ones, sometimes the green ones were by the red ones, etc. He enjoyed that as thoroughly, as ardently, as a happy, contented child.

The misfortune which he was now lamenting had been occasioned by the little pug dog having suddenly jumped up on the table and knocked off his most beautiful cup.

The Princess promised to see that he would get a lovely new cup in the latest design from Paris. He then expressed his satisfaction and smiled broadly. He only then seemed to notice the Kapellmeister, to whom he turned and asked if he had a lot of beautiful cups. Kreisler had already learned from Meister Abraham what he was expected to reply. He assured the Prince that he had nowhere nearly as beautiful cups as His Highness and that it would be impossible for him to spend as much money on them as His Highness did.

"You see," replied Ignatius very contentedly, "you see, I am a Prince and therefore I can have as many beautiful cups as I want, but you cannot because you are not a Prince, for, because I am quite certainly a Prince, so beautiful cups are—." Cups and princes, princes and cups got more and more tangled in a more and more confused speech, and at the same time Ignatius laughed and hopped around and clapped his hands in blissful happiness! Hedwiga, blushing, cast down her eyes; she was ashamed of her imbecile brother; she feared unjustly Kreisler's contempt, in whose innermost heart the Prince's idiocy, a state of insanity, aroused only a pity that could not alleviate but rather increased the tension of the moment. To get the poor boy's thoughts away from his wretched cups, the Princess begged him to arrange the little collection of books that were in an elegant bookcase. Quite content-

edly, with merry laughter, the Prince at once began to take out the neatly bound books and, arranging them according to size, placed them so that the golden edges facing outward made a shining row which pleased him immeasurably.

Fräulein Nannette rushed in and cried loudly, "The Fürst, the Fürst with the Prince!"

"Oh my Lord," said the Princess, "I must change. Really, Kreisler, we have thoughtlessly chatted away an hour—I quite forgot myself—myself and the Fürst and the Prince." She disappeared with Nannette into a neighboring room. Prince Ignatius kept right on with his work.

The Fürst's state carriage was already arriving. When Kreisler reached the bottom of the main staircase, the two footmen in their state livery were already climbing off the sausage. This must be explained in more detail.

Fürst Irenäus did not abandon the old customs; but at that time, when a swift-footed Hanswurst[38] in a gay jacket no longer had to run ahead of the horses like a hunted animal, he had among his servants two footmen, nice, charming people of mature years, well-fed and only occasionally bothered by stomach pains because of sitting so much. The Fürst was too humanely minded to expect a servant to turn himself from time to time into a whippet or some such mongrel just to maintain the appearance of proper court etiquette, and so, when the Fürst went out in full regalia, the two footmen had to ride ahead on a sort of sausage and, at suitable moments—when, for example, several bystanders had assembled—to move their legs to suggest real running. It was fun to see.

The footmen had just dismounted, the chamberlains entered the front portal, and Fürst Irenäus followed them. At his side strode a young man of impressive appearance, in the rich uniform of the Neapolitan Guard, with stars and crosses on his breast. *"Je vous salue, Monsieur de Krösel,"* said the Fürst when he saw Kreisler. He was in the habit of saying Krösel instead of Kreisler when he spoke French at solemn, festive occasions and could not really think of any German names. The foreign Prince—for Nannette had probably meant the stately young man when she cried out that the Fürst was coming with the Prince—nodded fleetingly to

38. *Hanswurst* is the name given the stock clown in German comedy. The Fürst seems to have taken the name literally ("Hans sausage") and given his footmen a sausage-shaped object to ride on.

Kreisler in passing, a form of greeting which Kreisler found quite intolerable even from people of high degree. Therefore, he bowed down to the ground in such a burlesque fashion that the plump Court Chamberlain, who thought that Kreisler was a real clown and that everything he did and said was funny, could not help tittering. The young Prince cast a burning glance at him with his dark eyes, murmured between his teeth, "Fool," and then strode swiftly after the Fürst who was looking around for him with gentle gravity. "For an Italian guardsman," Kreisler called laughingly to the Court Chamberlain, "His Highness speaks a passable German. Tell him, Your Excellency, that I can serve him in return with the most exquisite Neapolitan unmixed with any charming Romansh,[39] and certainly not in poor Venetian as in the masques by Gozzi;[40] in short, I will not deceive him. Tell him, Your Excellency—." But His Excellency was already climbing the stairs, his shoulders drawn up as a bulwark and refuge for his ears.

The royal carriage in which Kreisler usually rode to Sieghartshof stopped. The old gamekeeper opened the carriage door and asked if he were ready. At that moment a kitchen boy ran by, howling and shrieking, "Oh, what a misfortune! Oh, what *malheur*!"

"What has happened?" Kreisler called to him.

"Oh, what a misfortune!" replied the kitchen boy, weeping still more violently. "The Head Chef is in despair, is truly insane, and insists that he will stab himself with his ragout knife because His Highness has suddenly ordered dinner and there are no mussels for the Italian salad. He wants to go to the city himself, and the Head Stable Master refuses to harness the horses because he does not have an order from His Highness."

"That can be arranged," said Kreisler. "Let the Head Chef get into this carriage and buy the best mussels in Sieghartsweiler while I walk to the selfsame city." With that he ran off into the park.

"A great soul—a noble spirit—a charming gentleman!" the old gamekeeper called after him, while tears filled his eyes.

The distant mountain was outlined by the flames of the sunset; and the golden, glowing reflection spread playfully across the meadows and through the trees and the bushes as if driven by the rising evening wind.

39. One of the official languages of Switzerland.

40. Count Carlo Gozzi (1720–1806), who wrote masques in the Venetian dialect.

Kreisler stopped in the middle of the bridge which led across a wide arm of the lake to the little fisherman's hut, and looked down at the water, in which the park with its wonderful clumps of trees and the Geierstein looming high above, wearing its shiny white ruins on its head like a strange crown, were reflected with a magic shimmer. The tame swan, which answered to the name of Blanche, was paddling around in the lake, its beautiful neck proudly held high, its shining wings rustling. "Blanche, Blanche," called Kreisler loudly as he stretched out his arms. "Sing your most beautiful song, but do not believe that you must then die! You may nestle against my breast while you sing, for then your marvelous notes are mine and only I die in rapturous yearning while you will drift in life and love on the caressing waves!" Even Kreisler did not know what suddenly moved him so deeply; he leaned on the railing, unconsciously closing his eyes. Then he heard Julia singing, and an ineffably sweet sadness flooded his heart.

Dark clouds drifted by and cast broad shadows like black veils on the mountain and on the forest. Muffled thunder rumbled in the east, the night wind blew harder, the brook splashed, and from time to time the weather harp clanged like a distant organ; startled, the night birds flew up and fluttered through the forest, screaming.

Kreisler awoke from his dream and saw his dark reflection in the water. Then it seemed to him as if Ettlinger, the mad painter, were looking at him from the depths. "Ho ho," he cried, "Ho ho, are you there, my beloved double, my stout companion? Listen, young man, for a painter who went a bit out of bounds, who arrogantly wanted to use royal heart's blood instead of paint, you are looking fairly good. I really believe, dear Ettlinger, that you have made fools of the illustrious family with your insane actions! The longer I look at you, the more I see you have excellent manners, and so I will assure the Fürstin Maria that, in regard to your position or situation in the water, you must be a man of the most important rank and she can love you without any further difficulties. But, my friend, if you still want the Fürstin to resemble your portrait, you must imitate the royal dilettante who made his portraits resemble the people he painted by skillfully painting the people! Well! If they have sent you undeservedly to Hades, I will now bring you all the news. You should know, honored colonist of a madhouse, that the wound you inflicted on the poor child, the

lovely Princess Hedwiga, is still not properly healed, so that she sometimes does all sorts of foolish things from the pain. Did you strike her heart so hard, so painfully, that hot blood still spurts forth when she sees your specter, just as corpses bleed when the murderer approaches? Do not blame me, good sir, that she thinks me a ghost, and your ghost at that. But just when I was in the middle of proving that I am not a stupid revenant, but the Kapellmeister Kreisler, Prince Ignatius thwarted me. He is obviously suffering from paranoia, from a *fatuitas,* a *stoliditas,* which, according to Kluge,[41] is a pleasant sort of true idiocy. Do not copy all my gestures, painter, when I speak seriously to you! What again? If I were not afraid of catching cold, I would jump in and beat you up thoroughly. Go to the devil, you infamous mimic!"

Kreisler sprang swiftly away.

It had now become quite black; lightning flashed through the dark clouds, thunder rolled, and the rain began to fall in large drops. A bright, blinding light, toward which Kreisler hastened, gleamed from the fisherman's hut.

Not far from the door, in the full glow of the light. Kreisler saw his own image, his own self, striding along beside him. Filled with horror, Kreisler dashed into the little house and collapsed into a chair, breathless and pale as death.

Meister Abraham was sitting at a small table, on which an astral lamp cast its blinding rays, and was reading in a large folio. He jumped up in alarm, approached Kreisler, and cried, "For heaven's sake, what is the matter with you, Johannes? Where did you come from so late in the evening? What has frightened you so?"

Kreisler pulled himself together with difficulty and then spoke in a hollow voice. "It cannot be helped. There are two of us—I mean, I and my double, who has leaped out of the lake and followed me here. Have mercy, Meister, take your dagger, stab the wretch—he is insane, believe me, and can destroy us both. He has conjured up the storm. Spirits are stirring in the sky, and their singing lacerates the human heart! Master—master! Entice the swan hither! Let it sing—my song is frozen, for my double has placed the cold white hand of death on my breast, but it will have

41. According to Ellinger, this occurs in Christian Reil, *Rhapsodien über die Anwendung der psychischen Kurmethode auf Geisteszerrüttungen* [Rhapsodies on the application of psychic curative techniques to the insane] (Halle, 1803), pp. 398–99.

to draw it away when the swan sings and dive down again into the lake." Meister Abraham did not let Kreisler say more; he talked to him with friendly words, offered him several glasses of a fiery Italian wine, which he happened to have there, and asked him bit by bit what had happened.

Kreisler had scarcely ended when Meister Abraham laughed loudly. "There you have the inveterate fantasist! The consummate perceiver of ghosts! As to the organist who was performing fearful chorales in the park, that was only the night wind which was roaring around, twanging the strings of the weather harp. Yes, yes, Kreisler, you have forgotten the weather harp which is stretched out between the two pavilions at the end of the park.[42] As to your double which ran beside you in the glow of my astral lamp, I can show you now that as soon as I step out by the door, my double is also there—that anyone who comes near me will have such a *chevalier d'honneur* at his side."

Meister Abraham stepped outside the door, and at once a second Meister Abraham stood in the glow beside him.

Kreisler observed the effect of a hidden concave mirror and was irritated, as is anyone whose belief in the miraculous is shattered. A terrible fright pleases a man more than the natural explanation of what seemed to be ghostlike. He is not at all satisfied with this world, but insists on seeing things from other worlds which do not manifest themselves physically.

"I cannot," said Kreisler, "I cannot understand, Meister, your strange interest in such nonsense. Like a skillful chef, you prepare your miracle out of all kinds of sharp ingredients and think that people whose fantasy has become dulled like the gourmand's stomach have to be aroused by such mischief. Nothing is more stupid than when one finds out that the damn tricks that wring the heart happened naturally."

"Naturally! Naturally!" cried Meister Abraham. "As a man of considerable intelligence you should realize that nothing occurs naturally in the world—nothing at all! Or do you believe, worthy Kapellmeister, that because we have the means to produce a cer-

42. The Abbot Gattoni of Milan had fifteen iron strings stretched from one tower to another and so tuned that they played a diatonic scale. At each change in the atmosphere these strings sounded stronger or weaker according to the extent of that change. This Aeolian harp was usually called a giant harp or a weather harp. [Hoffmann's note.]

tain effect, the cause of that effect which flows from the mysterious organism is clear to see? You have always had great respect for my tricks although you have never seen the crowning one."

"You mean the Invisible Maiden,"[43] said Kreisler.

"Of course," continued Meister Abraham. "It is this trick—it is really more than that—which would have convinced you that the most ordinary and most easily calculated mechanisms are often linked with nature's most mysterious marvels and can produce effects which must remain inexplicable—taking this word in its most usual meaning."

"Hm," spoke Kreisler, "if you proceeded according to known acoustical theory and knew how to conceal the apparatus cleverly and had a clever, skillful creature available—"

"Oh Chiara!" cried Meister Abraham as tears glistened in his eyes. "Oh Chiara, my sweet, dear child!"

Kreisler had never seen the old man so deeply moved, for Meister Abraham had never had any use for sad feelings but was always in the habit of mocking them.

"Who is this Chiara?" asked the Kapellmeister.

"It is really too bad," said Meister Abraham smiling. "It is really too bad that I must seem like a lachrymose old man today, but it is the will of the stars that I should tell you about a moment of my life about which I have so long kept silent. Come here, Kreisler, see this big book; it is the most remarkable one I possess, the property of a conjurer called Severino, and I was just sitting there and reading the most remarkable things and looking at little Chiara who is depicted in it, and then you dash in, beside yourself, and scorn my magic at the very moment that I am wallowing in the recollection of its most beautiful marvel that was mine during my prime."

"Tell me about it at once," cried Kreisler, "so that I can howl with you."

"It is not," began Meister Abraham, "It is not very surprising that I, otherwise a strong young man of quite handsome appearance, from exaggerated zeal and great ambition exhausted myself completely building the great organ in the church at Göniönesmühl. The doctor said, 'Run, worthy organ builder, run up hill and down dale and into the world,' and I really did, amusing myself at the same time by appearing everywhere as a

43. See p. 39, note 31.

mechanic and giving performances of clever magic tricks. They went well and brought me a lot of money until I ran across this man called Severino, who laughed rudely at my tricks and almost persuaded me, as he had ordinary people, to believe that he was in league with the devil or at least with some more respectable spirits. His female oracle, a trick that was later known under the name of the Invisible Maiden, aroused the greatest attention. A globe of the finest, clearest glass hung from the ceiling in the middle of the room, and from this globe, like a gentle wind, came the answers to the questions directed at the invisible being. Not only the seeming impossibility of this phenomenon, but also the heart-rending, sympathetic, spiritual voice of the Invisible Maiden, the appropriateness of her answers, yes, her real gift of prophecy assured the artist a constant audience. I thrust myself upon him, I spoke a great deal about my mechanical tricks, but he despised all my knowledge—although in another sense than you do, Kreisler—and insisted that I build him a water organ for use in his house, although I proved to him that the deceased Herr Hofrat, Meister of Göttingen, states in his tract *De veterum hydraulo*[44] that there was nothing in such a *hydraulos* and that there was nothing to be saved by it but a few pounds of air which, the Lord be praised, was still available free. Finally Severino explained that he needed the softer tones of such an instrument to accompany the Invisible Maiden and that he would reveal the secret to me if I would swear on the Sacrament that I would neither use it myself nor reveal it to others, although he believed that it would not be easy to imitate his device without—here he hesitated and made a mysterious charming face as Cagliostro does at times when he talks to women about his magic trances. Full of curiosity to see his Invisible Maiden, I promised to construct the water organ as well as could be, and then he gave me his confidence—even grew to like me, since I gave him willing assistance in his labors. One day as I was on my way to Severino, a crowd of people were gathered on the street. I was told that a decently dressed man had just fainted. I pushed through the crowd and recognized Severino, who was just being lifted up and carried into the nearest house. A doctor, who had happened along, helped him. After various restoratives had been applied, Severino opened his eyes with a deep sigh. The look which he directed at me from under convulsively drawn eye-

44. A book by Albert Ludwig Friedrich Meister (d. 1788).

brows was terrible to behold; the horror of death's struggle glowed in his eyes with a somber fire. His lips trembled; he tried to speak and was unable to. Finally he violently struck his hand several times on his waistcoat pocket. I reached in and pulled out several keys. 'Those are the keys of your dwelling,' I said. He nodded. 'That is the key,' I continued, holding one up before his eyes, 'that is the key to the little room which you would never let me enter.' He nodded again. But when I wanted to ask him more, he began to groan and moan in dreadful fear; cold sweat stood on his forehead, he stretched out his arms and bent them into a circle as if he were embracing something and pointed to me. 'He wants you,' said the doctor, 'he wants you to put his things, his apparatus, in a safe place and perhaps, if he should die, that you should keep them?' Severino nodded his head more violently, finally cried, '*Corre!*' and again sank back, unconscious. Quickly I hurried to Severino's dwelling, trembling with curiosity and expectation; I opened the little room where the Invisible Maiden had to be locked up and was not a little astonished when I found it empty. The only window was heavily draped so that light penetrated only dimly, and a large mirror hung on the wall opposite the door. When I by chance stepped in front of the mirror and saw my form in the dim light, a strange feeling went through me as if I were sitting on the insulated chair of an electrical machine. In the same moment the voice of the Invisible Maiden spoke in Italian, 'Spare me today, father! Do not lash me so cruelly; after all, you are now dead!' I quickly opened the door of the room so that the full light streamed in, but I could not see a living soul. 'It is good,' said the voice, 'it is good, father, that you have sent Herr Liscov, for he will no longer allow you to lash me; he will break the magnet and you will no longer be able to leave the grave in which he will have you laid; no matter how much you resist, you are only a dead man and no longer belong to life.' You can well imagine, Kreisler, that a deep fear pulsated through me, because I saw nobody and yet the voice hovered close to my ears. 'Devil,' I spoke loudly to give myself courage, 'if I saw a wretched, little bottle anywhere, I would smash it and the *diable boiteux*[45] released from his prison would stand bodily before me, but so—' Then it suddenly seemed to me as if the gentle sighs that echoed through the room came

45. In René Lesage, *Le diable boiteux* (1707), the hero releases a devil from a bottle.

from a container in the corner that seemed to me to be far too small to harbor a human being. But I leaped over, slid open the bolt, and there, curled up like a worm, lay a girl who stared at me with large, marvelously beautiful eyes. She finally stretched out her arms to me when I cried, 'Come out, my little lamb, come out, my little Invisible Maiden!' I seized her hand as she raised it and an electric shock flashed through my body." "Stop," cried Kreisler, "stop, Meister Abraham. When I accidentally touched Princess Hedwiga's hand, the same thing happened to me, and I still feel a shock, though a less strong one, whenever she graciously offers me her hand."

"Ho ho," replied Meister Abraham, "Ho ho. Perhaps our Princess is after all a kind of *gymnotus electricus* or *raja torpedo* or a *trichourus indicus*,[46] as my sweet Chiara was to a certain degree, or probably just a cheerful mouse, like the one that gave the good Signor Cotugno[47] a severe box on the ear when he seized it by its back to dissect it, which you no doubt could not have intended to do to the Princess! But let us speak about the Princess some other time and stick to the Invisible Maiden now. When I recoiled, alarmed by the unexpected blow of the little eel, the girl spoke in German in a wonderfully cheerful tone. 'Oh, do not hold it against me, Herr Liscov, but I cannot help it; the pain is much too severe.' Without further delay, I took the little girl gently by the shoulders, pulled her out of her dreadful prison, and there stood before me a delicately built, charming object about the size of a twelve-year-old girl, but to judge by her physical development, at least sixteen years old. Look in that book; the picture resembles her, and you will have to confess that there is no more charming and expressive face, although you must realize that the strange, deeply illuminating fire in her lovely black eyes cannot be caught in a picture. Anyone who is not passionately attached to snow-white skin and flaxen hair must acknowledge the perfection of the little face, for it is true that my little Chiara's skin was a bit too brown and her shining hair was a gleaming black. Chiara—you already know that the little Invisible Maiden was called thus—Chiara flung herself down before me, all sadness and pain; tears streamed from her eyes, and she spoke with an ineffable expression, *'Je suis sauvée.'* I felt myself filled with the deepest pity; I suspected

46. "Electric eel"; "electric ray"; "swordfish".
47. Domenico Cotugno (1754–1822) was a doctor in Naples.

terrible things! Severino's body was brought in; a second stroke had killed him shortly after I had left. As soon as Chiara saw the body, her tears dried up, she looked at the dead Severino seriously and then left when the people who had come along looked at her curiously and said that no doubt she was the Invisible Maiden in the little room. I found it impossible to leave the girl alone with the corpse; the kind landlord and his wife declared themselves willing to take her in with them. But when I went into the little room after the others had left, Chiara was sitting in front of the mirror in the strangest condition. Her eyes firmly fixed on the mirror, she seemed like a sleepwalker who sees nothing. She was whispering incomprehensible words, which become clearer and clearer until, alternating German, French, Italian, and Spanish, she spoke of things that seemed to pertain to distant people. To my no little astonishment I noticed that precisely the hour had arrived during which Serverino was accustomed to have the female oracle speak. Finally Chiara closed her eyes and seemed to fall into a deep sleep. I took the poor child in my arms and carried her down to the landlady. The next morning I found the little girl cheerful and calm, just now beginning to understand her freedom, and she told me everything I wanted to know. You must not be put out, Kapellmeister, although you usually make much of good birth, that my little Chiara was nothing but a little gypsy girl who had been with a whole band of these dirty people, guarded by police, roasting in the sun in some market square, when Severino chanced to pass. 'White brother, shall I tell your fortune?' the eight-year-old girl cried to him. Severino looked the little girl in the eye for a long time, then he actually let the lines of his palm be read and expressed great surprise. He must have found something quite special in the little girl, because he immediately went up to the police lieutenant who was leading the train of arrested gypsies and said he would give a considerable amount for permission to take the gypsy girl. The police lieutenant said brusquely that this was not a slave market, adding however that since the little girl could not be actually counted as a real person and would only be a problem in jail, she would be available if the gentleman wished to pay ten ducats to the city poor-relief. Severino immediately pulled out his money bag and counted out the ducats. Both Chiara and her old grandmother, who had listened to the whole proceeding, began to howl and shriek and did not want to be separated. But then the guards inter-

vened, threw the old woman on the rack-wagon which was ready to leave; the police lieutenant, who perhaps at that moment considered his own money bag to be the city poor-relief, pocketed the ducats, and Severino dragged Chiara away, whom he tried to soothe by buying her a pretty new dress at the same marketplace where he had found her and by also stuffing her with sweets. It is certain that even at that time Severino had the trick of the Invisible Maiden in mind and had found in the little gypsy girl all the talents needed for assuming that role. Besides training her carefully, he tried to influence her psyche, which seemed especially inclined to exalted states during which a prophetic spirit glowed in the girl, by artificial means—remember Mesmer and his dreadful treatments[48]—and he transported her into this state every time she was to prophesy. Through an unfortunate chance he discovered that the little girl was especially sensitive after being hurt; pain increased unbelievably her ability to see through a strange ego, with the result that she seemed quite spiritualized. And so this horrible person lashed her in the cruelest way each time she was to be transported to a state of higher perception. In addition to this torture, Chiara, poor thing, often had to lie curled up all day in that container when Severino was away, so that if anyone should happen to enter the little room, Chiara's presence would remain a secret. She also had to travel in that box with Severino. Chiara's fate was unhappier and more dreadful than that of the dwarf whom the well-known Kempelen[49] took around with him and who had to play chess hidden in the figure of the Turk. I found a considerable sum in gold and paper in Severino's desk, which assured little Chiara a considerable income. I destroyed the apparatus for the oracle—that is, the acoustical arrangements in the main room and the little room—as well as many other tricks that could not be carried away, and following Severino's clearly spoken bequest, I appropriated many secrets from his effects. When this was all completed, I took a sad farewell of little Chiara, whom the landlady wished to keep as her own dear child, and left the town. A year

48. Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815) invented the theory of animal magnetism. His violent cures were described by Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland in the article "Mesmer und sein Magnetismus" in the *Teutscher Merkur* (1784, 4th quarter). This article was available to Hoffmann.

49. Wolfgang von Kempelen (1734–1804) was an inventor of mechanical figures. His most famous one was that of a Turk that played chess. A dwarf was supposedly concealed inside.

passed; I was about to return to Göniönesmühl, where the very honorable magistrate wanted me to repair the town organ; but heaven takes a special delight in making me be a public performing magician, and for this reason gave a damned boy the power to steal my purse, in which I had all my money, forcing me to become a mechanic, with many testimonies and patents, who performed tricks in order to eat. That had occurred in a little town not far from Sieghartsweiler. One evening I was sitting there, hammering and filing a little magic box, when the door opened and a female creature entered, protesting, 'No, I could not endure it any longer, Herr Liscov. I would have died of longing! You are my master—command me!' She ran over to me and was about to throw herself at my feet, but I caught her in my arms—it was Chiara! I scarcely recognized the girl, who was easily a foot taller and had grown stronger without it affecting the delicate structure of her figure. 'Dear, sweet Chiara!' I cried, deeply moved, and pressed her to my breast. 'You will let me stay with you, Herr Liscov,' said Chiara. 'You will not reject poor Chiara, who owes her freedom and her life to you?' With that she ran quickly to the box that the driver was just pushing in, pressed so much money into the fellow's hand that he leaped to the door like a cat, shouting, 'Oh, the deuce! The dear little Moorish child!' She opened the box, took out this book, and gave it to me saying, 'There, Herr Liscov, is Severino's very best thing which you forgot'; and while I opened the book, she calmly started unpacking her clothes. You can imagine, Kreisler, that the little Chiara put me in quite an embarrassing position. But—it is now time, my fellow, that you learned to respect me, since you think of me as a practical joker because I helped you pilfer your uncle's ripe pears from the trees and replace them with painted wooden ones, or put orange water with manure in his watering can, which he then poured on his burlap trousers that were spread out on the grass to bleach, which made them beautifully mottled—in short, because I led you on to crazy pranks, since you, I say, made me a practical joker without a heart, or at least one who had put on such a thick clown's jacket that he did not feel the blows. Do not give yourself airs with your sensitivity, with your tears, because look, I must again weep abjectly as you only too often do; but it is a devilish matter that in one's old age one must open his heart to young people like a *chambre garnie*." Meister Abraham stepped to the window and looked out into the night.

The storm was over; mid the rustling of the forest, raindrops could be heard falling, shaken down by the night wind. Gay dance music echoed from the distant palace. "Prince Hektor," said Meister Abraham, "Prince Hektor is opening the *partie à la chasse* with several leaps, I believe—"

"And Chiara?" asked Kreisler.

"It is right," continued Meister Abraham, as he leaned back exhausted in his armchair. "It is right, my son, that you remind me of Chiara, for in this fateful night I must drain the cup of my bitterest memories to the last drop. Oh! While Chiara was hopping busily back and forth, while her face glowed with purest joy, I felt that it would be quite impossible for me ever to leave her again, that she would have to become my wife. And yet I said, 'But Chiara, what am I to do with you if you stay here now?' Chiara came to me and said very seriously, 'Master, you will find in the book I brought you the exact description of the oracle. Besides, you have already seen the arrangements for it. I will be your Invisible Maiden!' 'Chiara,' I cried, quite disconcerted, 'Chiara, what are you saying? Do you think me a Severino?' 'Oh, be quiet about Severino,' replied Chiara. Well, why should I tell you all the details, Kreisler? You know that I astonished the whole world with my Invisible Maiden, and you can be sure that I never stimulated my dear Chiara in any way or restricted her liberty. She herself told me when she felt able or, rather, would feel able to play the part of the Invisible Maiden; and only at those times did my oracle speak. Besides, this role had become a necessity for my little one. Certain events, which you will learn about later, brought me to Sieghartsweiler. It was part of my plan to arrange a very mysterious arrival. I moved into an isolated dwelling owned by the widow of the royal chef. Through her the tale of my marvelous tricks soon reached the court. What I had expected, occurred. The Fürst—I mean the father of Fürst Irenäus—sought me out, and my prophetic Chiara was the enchantress who, as if inspired by divine power, often revealed to him his inner self, so that he was now able to understand clearly many things that had formerly been veiled from him. Chiara, who had become my wife, lived at the house of a trusty friend in Sieghartshof and came to me in the dark of the night so that her presence remained a secret. For you see, Kreisler, people are so obsessed with marvels that even if the Invisible Maiden trick could not have been possible without the as-

sistance of a human being, they would still have thought it a silly hoax if they had found out that the Invisible Maiden was flesh and bone. Everyone in that town called Severino a fraud after his death when they discovered that it was a little gypsy who had spoken in the small room, not admiring at all the clever acoustical arrangements which caused the voice to come out of the glass globe. The old Fürst died. I was heartily sick of my tricks and my secret life with my Chiara. I wanted to move with my dear wife to Göniönesmühl and construct organs again. Then one night Chiara, who was to play the part of the Invisible Maiden for the last time, failed to come, and I had to send the curious people away unsatisfied. My heart beat with a fearful premonition. In the morning I ran to Sieghartshof; Chiara had left at the usual hour. Well, fellow, why do you stare at me so? I hope you are not going to ask any foolish questions! You know—Chiara had vanished without a trace —never, never, have I seen her again!"

Meister Abraham jumped up quickly and rushed to the window. A deep sigh relieved the flow of blood that gushed from his lacerated heart. Kreisler respected the old man's deep pain by silence.

"You cannot," Meister Abraham began finally, "you cannot go back to the city now, Kapellmeister. It is midnight. Outside, as you know, dwell evil doubles and all sorts of threatening things that could ruin us. Mad, completely mad—"

(M.c.)—be, however, if such unsuitable things should occur in sacred places—I mean in the auditorium. I feel so oppressed—my heart so constricted—I am unable to write any more. I am so filled with exalted thoughts—I must stop and take a bit of a walk.

I return to my writing table; I feel better. But the mouth overflows with that which fills the heart, as does the poet's quill. I heard Meister Abraham once say that there was an old book in which there was something about a curious person who had a special *materia peccans* rumbling around in him which could only escape through his fingers. However, he placed a nice white paper under his hand and caught all the evil rumbling matter that wanted to escape and called these vile excretions poems which he had created from his heart. I consider the whole thing a malicious satire, but it is true that sometimes a peculiar feeling, I might almost call it a spiritual cramp, goes through me to my paws,

which have to write down everything I think. That is happening to me now. It can harm me; deluded cats can become angry, even let me feel their claws, but it must come out!

My master had spent the whole morning reading in a pigskin quarto volume. When he finally went out at his usual hour, he left the book lying open on the table. Intent on knowledge as I am, I quickly jumped up, curious to snoop around and see what kind of a book it could be that my master studied with such zeal. It was a beautiful, marvelous work of old Johannes Kunisperger[50] about the natural influence of the constellations, the planets, and the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Yes indeed, I can quite rightfully call that book beautiful and marvelous, for as I read, did not the marvel of my existence, of my passage through the world reveal itself to me in all its clarity? Ha, while I write this, the wonderful stars flame above my head, shining into and out of my soul in a beautiful relationship. Yes, I feel the glowing, blessed ray of the long-tailed comet on my forehead.—Yes, I am myself the glowing, long-tailed star, the heavenly meteor that in great glory crosses the world with prophetic threat. Just as the comet outshines all stars, so you will all vanish if I do not hide my talent under a bushel but allow my light to shine forth; and whether I do depends entirely on me—yes, you will all vanish into the black night, you pussycats, animals, and human beings! But in spite of the divine nature which radiates from me, that long-tailed spiritual light, do I not share the fate of all mortals? My heart is too good, I am too sensitive a cat, and I would like to attach myself to those who are weaker; and this occasions me grief and affliction. For must I not always be aware that I stand alone as in the deepest wilderness, since I do not belong to the present age; no, I belong to a future age of more advanced development, and therefore there is not a single soul that is able to admire me properly. And I become so happy when I am properly admired; even the praise of young, ordinary, uneducated cats does me a lot of good. I know how to astound them, but what good does it do? No matter what their efforts, they are unable to strike the right note of praise, no matter how much they shout, 'Meow, meow!' I must turn my thoughts to posterity who will value me. If I should write a philosophical work, who would be able to penetrate the depths of my spirit? If I conde-

50. Actually Johann Müller (1436–76), a mathematician and astronomer also known as Regiomontanus.

scend to write a play, where are the actors who would be able to perform it? If I venture to write a work of another type, if I write, for example, criticism—which is quite suitable for me to do because I hover above all who call themselves poets, writers, artists, and set myself up as the pattern, though unattainable, the ideal, for I alone can pronounce a competent judgment—who is there who can attain my vantagepoint, can share my views with me? Are there paws, or hands, which could press the deserved laurel wreath on my forehead? But there is a solution for that; I will do it myself and let him feel my claws who would dare to tug at my crown. There probably do exist such jealous beasts; I often dream that I am being attacked by them, and imagining that I must defend myself, I hit myself in the face with my sharp weapons and wound my lovely countenance miserably. One is likely to be somewhat distrustful in such noble self-estimation, but it cannot be otherwise. Did I not recently consider it a covert attack on my virtue and excellence when young Ponto spoke with several poodle youths in the street about the most recent phenomena of the day without mentioning me, although I was scarcely six feet away from him, sitting by the cellar window of my home? I was not a little angered that, when I reproached him for it, the fop tried to claim that he really had not noticed me at all.

But it is time that I told you sympathetic souls about a more beautiful posterity. Oh, I wish that this posterity existed in the present time and had intelligent thoughts about Murr's greatness and would speak out these thoughts in such a loud voice that one would hear nothing else for the loud cry. Yes, it is time that you found out some more of what happened to Murr in the days of his youth. Pay attention, good souls, a remarkable part of my life occurred next.

The Ides of March had come; the beautiful, mild rays of the spring sun shone on the roof, and a gentle fire glowed in me. An indescribable restlessness, an unknown, strange yearning had been plaguing me for a couple of days. Then I became calmer, but this was shortly followed by a state the like of which I had never imagined!

A creature slipped quietly and gracefully out of an attic window not far from me. Oh, that I might paint this very charming creature! She was completely dressed in white; only a little black velvet cap covered her charming forehead, and she wore little black

stockings on her delicate legs. A sweet fire sparkled in her lovely grass-green, beautiful eyes; the gentle motions of her neatly pointed ears suggested that virtue and intelligence dwelt in her, and the wave-shaped curling of her tail revealed a great charm and feminine sensitivity.

The sweet child did not seem to notice me; she looked at the sun, blinked, and sneezed. Oh, the sound vibrated through me with a sweet spasm; my pulse throbbed; my blood raced through my arteries; my heart was about to burst; an ineffably painful rapture, which quite overpowered me, poured out in a long, extended meow. The little one quickly turned her head toward me, looked at me with fear, a childlike, sweet shyness in her eyes. Invisible paws drew me toward her with an irresistible power; but as soon as I jumped at the charmer to embrace her, she vanished quick as a flash behind the chimney! Filled with anger and despair, I ran around on the roof and uttered the most miserable sounds; all in vain—she did not return! Ha, what a state! I could not eat; learning disgusted me; I did not want to read nor write. "Heavens," I cried out the following day after I had sought the charmer everywhere on the roof, in the attic, in the cellar, in all the hallways of the house, and had returned home. I was in despair, since the little one was constantly in my thoughts; the fish which my master had placed in front of me stared up at me from the dish with her eyes, and I cried out in rapturous insanity, "Is it you, my long-desired one?" and ate the fish in one bite. Then I cried, "Heavens, oh heavens, could that be love?" I became quieter; I decided that as a youth of erudition I should come to a clear understanding of my condition and began immediately, although with effort, to study Ovid's *De arte amandi,* as well as Manso's *Art of Loving;*[51] but none of the characteristics of a lover as given in these works seemed to fit me properly. It occurred to me suddenly that I had read in some play[52] that an unquestionable spirit and a neglected beard are specific characteristics of a lover! I looked in the mirror. Heavens, my beard was neglected! Heavens, my spirit was unquestionable!

Since I now knew that all was correct with the way I was in

51. Johann Kaspar Friedrich Manso (1760–1826), author of *Die Kunst zu lieben. Ein Lehrgedicht in drei Büchern* [The art of loving. A didactic poem in three books] (1794).

52. The tomcat means Shakespeare's *As You Like It,* II, 2. [Hoffmann's note.]

love, my soul was comforted. I decided to strengthen myself properly with food and drink and then to seek out the little one on whom I had bestowed my whole heart. A sweet presentiment told me that she was sitting in front of the door of the house. I slipped downstairs and really found her! Oh, what a reunion! Rapture, that ineffable erotic bliss, seethed through my breast. Miesmies—thus the little one was called, as I later discovered—Miesmies was sitting in an elegant position on her hindlegs and was washing herself by rubbing her face and ears with her little paws. With indescribable charm she was performing before my eyes that which elegance and cleanliness demand. She did not need any vulgar, artificial toiletries to enhance the charms given her by nature. I approached her more modestly than the first time and sat down next to her! She did not run away; she gave me a searching glance and then cast down her eyes. "Sweetheart," I began softly. "Be mine!"

"Bold cat," she replied in confusion. "Bold cat, who are you? Do you know me? If you are upright and true as I am, then tell me, swear to me, that you really love me."

"Oh," I cried enthusiastically, "by the horrors of Orkus, by the sacred moon, by all the rest of the stars and planets that will shine in the coming night if the sky is clear, I swear to you that I love you!"

"I love you, too," whispered the little one and pressed her head against me in sweet embarrassment. I was just about to put my paws around her in rapture when two gigantic cats jumped me with satanic growls. They bit me, scratched me frightfully, and rolled me for good measure into the gutter, so that dirty water closed over me. I was barely able to escape from the claws of those murderous beasts who had no respect for my rank. With a great cry of fear, I ran up the steps.

When my master saw me, he cried out, laughing loudly, "Murr, Murr, what do you look like? Ha, ha! I see what has happened. You have been up to some mischief like the cavalier who roamed in love's labyrinth[53] and thereby got into trouble!" To my no small annoyance, my master burst out again in a strident laugh. He filled a tub with lukewarm water and unceremoniously dipped me in several times so that what with sneezing and coughing I could neither see nor hear; then he wrapped me tightly in flannel

53. Adapted from the title of a novel by Johann Gottfried Schnabel (1692–1750).

and placed me in my basket. I was nearly out of my mind from anger and pain; I was unable to stir. Finally the warmth affected me beneficially; my thoughts collected themselves.

"Ha!" I complained, "another of life's bitter delusions! So that is love that I celebrated so marvelously in song and which is supposed to be the most exalted feeling, to fill us with a nameless rapture and carry us to heaven! Ha! It has thrown me into the ditch! I renounce the emotion that has brought me nothing but bites, a horrible bath, and degrading muffling in common flannel!" But scarcely was I at liberty and recovered, when Miesmies again filled my mind, and although clearly mindful of the disgrace I had endured, I realized to my horror that I was still in love. With effort I pulled myself together and like an intelligent, scholarly cat turned to Ovid, since I remembered having run across recipes against love in his *Ars amandi*.

I read the lines:

> Venus otia amat. Qui finem quaeris amoris,
> Credit amor rebus, res age, tutus eris![54]

With renewed zeal I tried to bury myself in learning, as prescribed here; but Miesmies jumped around before my eyes on every page. I thought—read—wrote Miesmies! The author, I decided, must have meant another kind of work; and since I had heard from other cats that hunting mice was an uncommonly pleasurable distraction, it was likely, after all, that hunting mice could be included in the meaning of *rebus*. Therefore, as soon as it became dark, I went down to the cellar and crept through the dark passageways while I sang, "In the forest wild and still I creep, my gun held at the ready."[55]

Ha! Instead of the game I thought to hunt, I really saw her charming image. It actually appeared from the depths. Love's bitter pain split my easily wounded heart! And I spoke, "Direct your charming glance toward me, virgin morning light, and as bride and groom let Murr and Miesmies wander home in rapture." Thus I, a joyful cat, spoke, hoping for the reward of victory. Poor me! With veiled eyes she, a shy cat, fled roofwards.

54. From Ovid, *Remedia Amoris* [Love's remedies], 5:143–44: "Venus loves leisure. You who seek the end of love (love believes in things), do the thing; you will be safe."

55. See Goethe's poem "Jägers Abendlied" [Hunter's evening song] (1780). Tieck's Puss-in-Boots also sings this song.

Thus poor I succumbed more and more to a love which a hostile star seemed to have aroused in my heart for my destruction. Raging, rebelling against my fate, I attacked Ovid again and read the lines:

> Exige, quod cantet, si qua est sine voce puella,
> Non didicit chordas, tangere, posce lyram.[56]

"Ha!" I cried, "I must seek her on the roof! Ha! I will find her again, the sweet charmer, where I saw her for the first time; but she shall sing, yes sing, and if she should produce but one false note, then all is over, for I will be healed, will be saved." The sky was clear, and the moon, by which I had sworn love to charming Miesmies, was really shining when I climbed up on the roof to lie in wait for her. For a long time I did not see her, and my sighs turned to loud cries of complaint.

I finally sang a little song in the most melancholy tone, approximately as follows:

> Rustling forests, whispering streams,
> Murmuring waves of flowing dreams,
> Mourn with me well!
> Tell me, oh tell!
> Charming young Miesmies, where has she wandered?
> Young man in love, young man is that
> Where he embraced Miesmies the cheerful?
> Comfort the fearful,
> Comfort the desperate, miserable cat!
> Moonlight, O moonlight,
> Tell me where this night
> Wanders my loved one, wanders my friend!
> Violent sorrow never will mend!
> Mentor of lovers that languish on some mat
> Hurry to loose
> Him from love's noose.
> Help him, oh help the desperate tomcat.

You see, gentle reader, that a valiant poet does not need to be in a rustling forest or to sit by a murmuring spring; playful waves of presentiment still flow toward him, and in these waves he sees what he wants to see and can sing about it as he wants to. If anyone

56. Also from *Remedia Amoris,* 5:33 and 336: "Demand that she sing if the girl has no voice. If she didn't learn to pluck the strings, call for a lyre."

should be too astonished at the supreme excellence of the above poem, I would like to point out modestly that I was in a state of exaltation, in the throes of love; and everyone knows, of course, that anyone who is seized by love's fever, even if he could not otherwise rhyme *moon* and *spoon* and *love* and *dove*—I repeat, if in spite of all his efforts, he could not remember these not completely unusual rhymes—suddenly he acquires the ability to create poetry and spouts forth the most excellent verses just as a person who has caught cold involuntarily breaks out in a fit of sneezing. We already owe many excellent works to the ecstasy of prosaic natures, and it is nice that human Miesmieses of no particular *beauté* acquire a marvelous reputation for a time. If this happens to dry wood, what must happen to green wood?—I mean, if common prosaic people are transformed into poets merely by falling in love, what must happen to true poets at this stage of their life? Well, I was neither sitting in a rustling forest nor by a murmuring spring; I was sitting on a bare, high roof. The bit of moonlight could scarcely be counted, and yet in masterly verses I summoned up forests and springs and waves and finally my friend Ovid to stand by me in my need. It was somewhat difficult for me to find rhymes for the name of my race, because even in my inspiration I did not know how to rhyme tomcat.[57] That I was able to find rhymes proved to me again the superiority of my race to that of the human, since not much rhymes with the word human,[58] which is why some wit of a dramatist remarked that the human being is an unrhymed creature.[59] I, on the other hand, am a rhymed one. Not in vain did I strike those notes of aching yearning, not in vain did I call upon the forests, the springs, and the moonlight to bring me the lady of my dreams, for out from behind the chimney came the charming girl, walking with a light, graceful step.

"Is it you, beloved Murr, who is singing so beautifully?" Miesmies cried to me.

"What," I replied in joyful astonishment. "What, do you know me, sweetest creature?"

"Ah," she spoke. "Ah, indeed, I liked you at first sight and it

57. Murr rhymes *Berater* ("mentor") with *Kater,* rejecting the common word *Vater* ("father").

58. German *Mensch.*

59. From August Friedrich von Kotzebue (1761–1819), a popular dramatist, *Der arme Poet*: "The human being *(Mensch)* is creation's masterpiece? There is no rhyme for 'human being.' He is an unrhymed creature." (I, i.)

wounded my soul that my two rude cousins tossed you so mercilessly into the gutter."

"Let us not speak," I interrupted her, "let us not speak of the gutter, dearest child. Oh, tell me, tell me if you love me!"

"I have," continued Miesmies, "I have inquired about your situation and have found out that you are called Murr and that you not only have a comfortable living with a very kind man but that you also enjoy all the luxuries of life and could well share these with a tender wife! Oh, I love you very much, dear Murr!"

"Heavens!" I cried in the greatest rapture. "Heavens, is it possible? Is it a dream? Is it reality? Oh stand firm, stand firm, reason, do not snap! Ha! Am I still on earth? Am I still sitting on the roof? Do I not hover in the clouds? Am I still the tomcat Murr? Am I not the man in the moon? Come to my breast, beloved. But first tell me your name, my beauty."

"I am called Miesmies," replied the little one, sweetly lisping in charming embarrassment, and sat down cozily next to me. How beautiful she was! Her white fur shone silver in the moonlight; her little green eyes sparkled with a gentle, languishing fire. "You—

(s.p.)—gentle reader, you could have found that out before; but Heaven grant that I do not have to make any more zigzags. Well, as I have said, the same thing happened to the father of Prince Hektor that had happened to Fürst Irenäus. He lost his little country out of his pocket; how, he did not know. Prince Hektor, who liked a quiet, peaceful life, and who, notwithstanding the fact that the royal chair had been pulled out from under him, liked to stand upright, and who, instead of ruling, at least wished to command, entered the service of the French and behaved uncommonly bravely; but one day, when a girl with a zither blubbered out, "Do you know the land where the lemons glow?"[60] immediately went to the country where such lemons really glow, i.e., to Naples, and put on a Neapolitan uniform instead of a French one. He became a general as rapidly as only a prince can. When Prince Hektor's father died, Fürst Irenäus opened the big book in which he himself listed all the royal heads of Europe and noted the death of his royal friend and companion in misfortune. After this

60. Goethe's poem in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (book III, 1) begins "Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn". Murr has changed *blühn* ("blossom") to *glühn* ("glow").

was done, he looked at Prince Hektor's name for a long time, then said out loud, "Prince Hektor!" and slammed the folio shut so violently that the Court Chamberlain staggered back three steps in fright. Then the Fürst stood up, paced slowly up and down the room, and took as much Spaniol snuff as was necessary to bring order to a whole world of thoughts. The Court Chamberlain spoke a great deal about his late master, who possessed an amiable heart along with great wealth, about the young Prince Hektor who was idolized in Naples by the monarch and the nation, etc. Fürst Irenäus did not seem to be paying any attention to all that; he stopped suddenly right in front of the Court Chamberlain, stared at him with his dreadful Frederick the Great look, and said very emphatically, *"Peut-être,"* and disappeared into the next room.

"Lord," said the Court Chamberlain, "the gracious Fürst certainly has the most considerable thoughts, perhaps even plans."

It was so. Fürst Irenäus thought about the Prince's wealth, about his relationship with powerful rulers; he called to mind his conviction that Prince Hektor would certainly exchange the dagger for the scepter, and the thought came to him that the marriage of the Prince with Princess Hedwiga could have the most advantageous results. The courtier, whom the Fürst despatched at once to express to the Prince his deepest sympathy at the death of his father, was instructed to put in his pocket, with the greatest secrecy, a miniature of the Princess which was a good likeness except for the color of her skin. It should be noted here that the Princess actually would have been called a perfect beauty if her skin had been less yellowish. Candlelight was advantageous to her.

The Court Chamberlain carried out the Fürst's secret mission very skillfully; the latter had not confided his aim to anyone, not even to the Fürstin. When the Prince saw the painting, he became almost as ecstatic as his royal colleague Tamino in *The Magic Flute*. Like him he almost shouted, even though he did not sing, "This likeness is enchantingly beautiful," and then, "Is my feeling really love? Yes, yes, it is naught but love!" It is not only love which makes princes woo the most beautiful women, although Prince Hektor was not thinking of other considerations when he sat down and wrote to Fürst Irenäus requesting permission to woo Princess Hedwiga.

Fürst Irenäus answered that he would happily agree to the marriage, which, for the sake of his deceased royal friend, he de-

sired from the bottom of his heart, and that it would not be necessary for him to do any more wooing. But since etiquette must be preserved, the Prince might send a man of the proper rank to Sieghartsweiler, whom he could empower to execute the marriage and, according to the good old custom, booted and spurred, to undertake the leap into the bed. The Prince wrote back, "I will come myself, Your Highness!"

The Fürst was not pleased. He considered a marriage by deputy nicer, more stately, more royal, and had been really looking forward to the festival and was only consoled by the fact that before the nuptials took place, a ceremony bestowing an order could be celebrated. He wanted in a very solemn fashion to place around the Prince's neck the great cross of the order of his house that his father had founded and which not a single knight now wore or was allowed to wear.

Prince Hektor came, therefore, to Sieghartsweiler to wed Princess Hedwiga and incidentally to receive the grand cross of the order of an extinct house. It seemed desirable to him that the Fürst keep intentions secret—especially, he begged, in regard to Hedwiga, since the Prince first had to be assured of her love before he could proceed with his wooing.

The Fürst did not really understand what the Prince was trying to say and replied that, as far as he knew and remembered, this form—namely, in regard to an assurance of love before the nuptials—had never been customary in royal houses. If the Prince meant by it nothing more than the expression of a certain attachment, that could not occur during the period of engagement, but since frivolous youth was inclined to leap over everything that etiquette demands, it could be done briefly, three minutes before the exchange of rings. It would be splendid and sublime if the royal couple could show at this moment a certain dislike for each other, but unfortunately the rules of highest etiquette had become empty dreams in recent times.

When the Prince saw Hedwiga for the first time, he whispered to his Adjutant in the Neapolitan dialect, so that the others could not understand, "By all the saints! She is lovely, but born not far from Vesuvius; and its fire flashes from her eyes."

Prince Ignatius had already urgently inquired whether there were lovely cups in Naples and how many of them Prince Hektor possessed, so that the latter having climbed up the whole scale of

greetings was about to turn to Hedwiga again, when the doors opened and the Fürst invited the Prince to the scene of splendor which he had prepared in the great hall, having called together all the people who were in any way at all qualified for court. This time he had been less strict in his choice, since affairs at Sieghartshof actually were considered country parties. Benzon was also present with Julia.

Princess Hedwiga was silent, withdrawn, apathetic. She did not seem to notice the handsome stranger from the south any more nor any less than any other new apparition at the court and asked her court lady, the pink-cheeked Nannette, rather crossly whether she had lost her mind, since she could not stop whispering in the Princess's ear that the foreign Prince was much too handsome and that she had never in her life seen a more beautiful uniform.

Prince Hektor spread his dazzling peacock's tail of gallantry before the Princess; she was almost offended by the violence of his mawkish rapture, and inquired about Italy and about Naples. The Prince gave her the description of a paradise in which she would stroll as a reigning goddess. He revealed himself a master of the art of so talking to a lady that everything he said turned into a hymn which praised her beauty and charm. The Princess fled in the middle of this hymn to Julia, whom she saw nearby, pressing Julia to her bosom, giving her a thousand tender names, crying, "This is my dear, dear sister, my wonderful, sweet Julia!" When the Prince, somewhat taken aback by the Princess's flight, approached them, he directed a queer, lengthy glance at Julia so that she had to cast down her eyes and, blushing furiously, turned to her mother who was standing behind her. But the Princess embraced her again and cried, "My dear, dear Julia!" as tears came to her eyes.

"Princess," said Benzon softly, "Princess, why this frantic behavior?"

Without paying any attention to Benzon, the Princess turned to the Prince, whose flow of language had really dried up at all this; and if she had been quiet, serious and irritable before, now she almost rambled in a kind of frantic merriment. Finally her tautly drawn strings eased, and the melodies that now flowed forth from her heart were softer, milder, more girlishly tender. She was more charming than ever, and the Prince seemed quite carried

away by her. Finally the dancing started. After several dances, the Prince offered to teach everyone a Neapolitan national dance; and he soon succeeded in giving the dancers a clear conception of it so that all adapted themselves very well and the passionately tender character of the dance became very evident.

No one had comprehended the character of the dance so well as Hedwiga, who was dancing with the Prince. She demanded an encore; and when the dance ended for the second time, ignoring the warning of Benzon, who saw the suspicious paleness of her face, insisted on executing the dance for a third time, since she could now do it very well. The Prince was enchanted. He floated off with Hedwiga, who seemed grace itself in all her movements. During one of the many embraces required by the dance, the Prince stormily pressed the charming girl to his bosom, and in that same moment Hedwiga collapsed in his arms, unconscious.

The Fürst said that there could not be a more unsuitable disturbance at a court ball, and only being in the country could excuse it.

The Prince himself carried the unconscious girl to a sofa in a nearby room, where Benzon rubbed her forehead with some kind of aromatic water which the doctor had on hand. The latter pronounced the faint only an attack of nerves which the excitement of the dance had caused and which would soon pass.

The doctor was right. After a few seconds the Princess opened her eyes with a deep sigh. As soon as the Prince heard that the Princess had recovered, he pushed through the circle of ladies that enclosed her, knelt by the sofa, and blamed himself bitterly for the incident which lacerated his heart. As soon as the Princess saw him, she cried out with loathing, "Go away! Go away!" and fainted again.

"Come," said the Fürst, taking the Prince by the hand. "Come, my dear Prince. You do not know that the Princess often suffers from the oddest fantasies. Heaven knows in what strange fashion you appear to her now. Imagine, my dearest Prince, when she was a child—*entre nous soit dit*—when she was a child, for one whole day the Princess thought I was the Grand Mogul and pretended that I ought to wear silk slippers when I went out riding, which I finally agreed to do, but only in the garden."

Prince Hektor laughed unceremoniously at the Fürst and ordered his carriage.

Benzon and Julia had to stay at the palace, as the Fürstin desired it out of her concern for Hedwiga. She knew the psychic power that Benzon usually had over her and also that attacks of that kind usually yielded to such psychic power. It really did happen this time that Hedwiga soon recovered in her room when Benzon spoke to her steadily and gently. The Princess claimed nothing less than that the Prince had changed into a dragon-like monster while dancing with her and had pricked her heart with his burning tongue.

"God forbid," cried Benzon. "Perhaps Prince Hektor is the *mostro turchino* in Gozzi's tale![61] What an imagination! Perhaps this, too, will end as with Kreisler, whom you considered a dangerous madman!"

"Never!" cried the Princess violently, and then added laughing: "Truly, I would not want my good Kreisler to turn suddenly into the *mostro turchino* like Prince Hektor!"

When Benzon, who had stayed awake all night by the Princess, came into Julia's room early in the morning, the latter came toward her, pale, drawn, her head drooping like a sick dove.

"What is the matter with you?" cried Benzon in alarm, as she was not accustomed to seeing her daughter in this condition.

"Oh, Mother," spoke Julia despairingly. "Let us never come here again. My heart trembles when I think of last night. There is something horrible about that Prince. I cannot tell you what happened to me when he looked at me. A flash of lightning shot destructively from those dark, mysterious eyes which would have killed poor me had it struck. Do not laugh at me, Mother, but it was the look of a murderer who has chosen his victim, who is slain by a mortal fear before ever the dagger is drawn! I repeat, a very strange feeling—I cannot name it—seized my limbs like a cramp. People speak of basilisks whose glance, a poisonous flash of fire, kills instantaneously if one dares to look at it. The Prince resembles such a threatening monster."

"Well," laughed Benzon, "well, I must really believe that there is something to this *mostro turchino,* since the Prince, although the handsomest and most charming man, has appeared to two girls as a dragon and a basilisk. I can credit the Princess with the

61. *Il mostro turchino* [The blue monster].

silliest notions; but that my quiet, gentle Julia, my sweet child, should succumb to such foolish visions—"

"And Hedwiga," Julia interrupted Benzon, "and Hedwiga—I don't know what evil, hostile power wishes to tear her from my heart and plunge me into the battle of the fearful illness that rages in her. Yes, I call the Princess's condition an illness against which the poor girl is unable to struggle. Yesterday, when she turned quickly away from the Prince, when she embraced me, kissed me, I felt then how she was burning with a fever. And then that dancing! That terrible dancing! You know, Mother, how I hate dances which permit the men to embrace us. It seems to me as if in that moment we have to give up everything demanded by decency and good manners and grant men superiority, all of which must be distasteful to them, at least to the sensitive ones. And now Hedwiga, who could not stop dancing that southern dance which seemed more and more dreadful to me the longer it lasted! It was a real, devilish spite that flashed from the Prince's eyes."

"Silly girl," said Benzon, "What ideas you have! But—I cannot object to such opinions. Keep them faithfully, but do not be unjust to Hedwiga. Do not brood any more about what is going on between her and the Prince; strike it from your mind! If you wish, I will arrange it so that you will not see Hedwiga or the Prince for a while. No, your peace of mind shall not be disturbed, my good, dear child! Come to my arms!" Benzon then embraced Julia with maternal tenderness.

"And," Julia continued, pressing her hot face to her mother's bosom, "perhaps those strange dreams which have quite upset me have come from that horrible turmoil which I felt."

"What did you dream?" asked Benzon.

"It seemed to me," Julia continued, "it seemed to me that I was wandering in a marvelous garden in which violets and roses blossomed together under thick, dark shrubs; and their sweet fragrance filled the air. A wonderful radiance like moonlight rose in sound and song; and as it touched the trees and the flowers with its golden rays, they trembled with rapture, and the bushes rustled and the springs uttered gentle, yearning sighs. Then I became aware that I myself was the melody that was drifting through the garden; but as the splendor of the sound faded, I had to vanish in painful melancholy! Then, however, a soft voice spoke. 'No,

sound is bliss and not annihilation, and I am holding you firm in my strong arms, and in your being rests my song, which is eternal like yearning!' It was Kreisler who was standing before me and was speaking these words. A heavenly feeling of comfort and hope passed through my heart, and I myself did not know—I am telling you everything, Mother! Yes, even I did not know how it happened that I sank on Kreisler's bosom. Then I suddenly felt iron arms embracing me firmly, and a dreadful, mocking voice cried, 'Why do you resist, miserable one, you are already dead and now you must be mine.' It was the Prince who held me firmly. I woke violently with a loud cry of fear, threw on my nightrobe, and ran to the window, which I opened, for the air in the room was damp and oppressive. In the distance I saw a man who was looking at the palace windows with a telescope and who then ran up the avenue in a strange, I might say, foolish way, dancing all kinds of entrechats and other steps while waving his arms in the air and, I thought, singing loudly. I recognized Kreisler, and although I had to laugh heartily at his behavior, he seemed to me like a benevolent spirit who would protect me from the Prince. Yes, it seemed as if Kreisler's inner being was for the first time clear to me that I understood for the first time how his seemingly mischievous humor, which often wounds people, comes from the truest, most wonderful soul. I could have run into the park, I could have told Kreisler all my fears of that terrible dream!"

"That," said Benzon seriously, "that is a foolish dream, and the sequel even more foolish! You need rest, Julia. A light morning slumber would do you good. I think I, too, will rest for a while."

With that Benzon left the room, and Julia did what she was bid.

When she woke up, the morning sun was streaming in the windows and a strong odor of violets and roses flooded the room. "What is that? My dream!" But when she looked around, a beautiful bouquet of those flowers was lying on the back of the sofa on which she had been sleeping.

"Kreisler, my dear Kreisler," said Julia softly, taking the bouquet and losing herself in a reverie.

Prince Ignatius inquired whether he might be permitted to see Julia for a short time. Julia dressed quickly and hurried to the room where Ignatius was waiting with a whole basket of china

cups and Chinese dolls. Julia, the good child, was happy to play for hours with the Prince, who aroused her deepest pity. Not a word of teasing or of scorn escaped her as there did at times from others, especially Princess Hedwiga; that is why Julia's company meant so much to him and he often called her his little bride. The cups were set up, the dolls arranged, Julia was just making an address to the Emperor of Japan in the name of little Harlequin (both dolls stood facing each other) when Benzon came in.

After she had watched the game for a while, she pressed a kiss on Julia's forehead and said, "You are truly my dear, good child!"

It was twilight. Julia, who at her own desire had not had to appear at the dinner table, was sitting alone in her room awaiting her mother. Then gentle steps approached, the door opened, and the Princess entered, pale as death, with staring eyes, in a white dress like a ghost.

"Julia," she said softly and dully. "Julia! You may call me foolish, impassioned, insane, but do not shut me out of your heart; I need your pity, your consolation! It is nothing but overstimulation, the harmful exhaustion from that hateful dance which has made me ill. But that is past; I am better! The Prince has gone to Sieghartsweiler! I must have some air; let us stroll in the park!"

When the two of them, Julia and the Princess, found themselves at the end of the avenue, they saw a bright light shining from the distant shrubbery, and they heard pious singing. "That is the evening litany from the Mary Chapel," cried Julia.

"Yes," said the Princess, "let us go there; let us pray! Pray for me, too, Julia!"

"Let us pray," replied Julia, touched by the deepest pain for her friend's condition. "Let us pray that no evil spirit will ever have power over us, that our pure, innocent souls may never be destroyed by the devil's enticement."

The country folk, who had been singing the litany in front of the image of Mary, which was decorated with many flowers and lighted by many lamps, had just departed when the girls reached the chapel, situated at the end of the park. They both knelt down on a prie-dieu. Then the singers in the little choir at the side of the altar began the "Ave maris stella"[62] which Kreisler had recently composed.

Beginning softly, the song grew in power and intensity in the

62. Composition by Hoffmann for four voices (1808).

dei mater alma until the sounds died away in the *felix coeli porta* and drifted off on the wings of the evening wind.

The girls remained on their knees, lost in fervent devotion. The priest murmured prayers; and from the remote distance, like a choir of angelic voices from a Heaven veiled by the night, echoed the hymn *O sanctissima,*[63] which the departing choir was singing.

Finally the priest dispensed the blessing. Then they stood up and fell in each other's arms. A nameless sorrow, woven of rapture and pain, struggled to free itself violently from their breasts; and the hot tears that poured from their eyes were the drops of blood that gushed from their wounded hearts.

"It was he," whispered the Princess softly.

"It was he," replied Julia.

They understood each other.

The forest waited in portentous silence for the moon to rise and scatter its shimmering gold. The chorale of the singers, which could still be heard in the silence of the night, seemed to be moving toward the cloudbank that flamed up brilliantly and hovered over the mountains, designating the path of the shining moon, before which the stars grew pale.

"Ah," said Julia, "what is it that stirs us so, that lacerates our hearts with a thousand aches? Just listen, how the distant song echoes so comfortingly! We have prayed, and innocent spirits speak to us from the golden clouds of celestial bliss."

"Yes, my Julia," replied the Princess seriously and firmly; "yes, my Julia, salvation and bliss exist above the clouds, and I wish that a heavenly angel would carry me to the stars before the dark power seizes me. I would probably die, but I know that they would carry me to the royal vault, and my ancestors who are buried there would not believe that I had died and would rouse themselves from their rigidity and drive me out. Then I would belong to neither the dead nor the living and would find shelter nowhere."

"What are you saying, Hedwiga? For heaven's sake, what are you saying?" cried Julia frightened.

"Once," continued the Princess in the same firm, almost indifferent tone, "once I dreamed something like that. But it is also likely that a hostile ancestor in his grave has turned into a vampire and is sucking my blood. That may cause my frequent fainting spells."

63. An *a cappella* by Hoffmann (1808).

"You are ill," cried Julia. "You are very ill, Hedwiga. The night air is harmful to you; let us hasten away."

She embraced the Princess, who silently allowed herself to be led away.

The moon had by now climbed high above the Geierstein; the bushes and trees stood in a magic glow and whispered and rustled, communing with the night wind in a thousand charming ways.

"It is so beautiful," said Julia, "it is so beautiful on earth. Does not nature offer us her most splendid marvels as a good mother does her dear children?"

"Do you think so?" replied the Princess, and then added after a while, "I did not intend you to understand me completely and beg you to consider everything I said as merely the outpouring of a bad mood. You do not yet know life's destructive pain. Nature is cruel; she only takes care of the healthy children; the sick ones she abandons, indeed aims destructive weapons at their existence. Ah, you know that to me nature used to be only a picture gallery set up for practicing the capabilities of the mind and hand, but now everything has changed, since I feel and surmise nothing but its horror. I would rather stroll through lighted rooms among gay people than alone with you in the moonlit night."

Julia became not a little frightened as she noticed that Hedwiga was becoming weaker and weaker and more and more exhausted; the poor girl had to use all her little strength to keep walking upright.

Finally they reached the palace. Not far from it there sat a dark, muffled form on the stone seat that was placed by an elderberry bush. As soon as Hedwiga saw her, she cried joyfully, "My thanks to the Virgin and all the saints. There she is!" and suddenly strong again and freeing herself from Julia, ran up to the figure, who rose and spoke in a hollow voice, "Hedwiga, my poor child!" Julia saw that the form was a woman wrapped in brown garments from head to toe, but the deep shadows prevented her from recognizing the features. Quivering with fear, Julia stopped.

Both the woman and the Princess sat down on the seat. The woman gently brushed the Princess's hair from her forehead, placed her hands on it, and spoke slowly and softly in a language which Julia could not remember ever having heard. After a few minutes the woman said to Julia, "Girl, hurry to the castle and call the ladies-in-waiting. See that someone helps the Princess in.

She has fallen into a gentle sleep from which she will wake up healthy and gay."

With no time to be surprised, Julia did as she was bidden.

When she returned with the ladies-in-waiting, they found the Princess carefully wrapped in her shawl, sleeping calmly; the woman had vanished.

"Tell me," said Julia next day, when the Princess had awakened quite recovered and showing not a trace of any inner derangement, as Julia had feared she would. "Tell me, for heaven's sake, who was the strange woman."

"I do not know," replied the Princess. "I have only seen her once before in my life. Do you remember the time when I once was mortally ill as a child so that the doctors despaired of me? Then suddenly one night she was sitting by my bed and, as today, lulled me into a sweet sleep from which I awoke quite recovered. Last night the image of this woman appeared to me again; it seemed to me as if she would appear and save me, and that is what really happened. Do me a favor and do not mention this apparition; do not let anyone know by word or sign that something miraculous occurred. Think of Hamlet and be my dear Horatio! It is certain that there is something mysterious about this woman, but may the secret remain hidden from you and me; further investigation seems to me to be dangerous. Is it not enough that I have recovered and am happy, rid of all the ghosts that pursue me?" Everyone was surprised at the Princess's sudden return to health. The doctor maintained that the walk in the night to the Mary Chapel had produced this drastic effect by the violent shock to all the nerves, and he had only forgotten expressly to order this walk. But Benzon said to herself, "Hm—the old woman has been with her—let that pass for now." It is now time that that fateful question of the biographers, "You—"

(M. c.)—love me, charming Miesmies? Oh, tell me again, tell me a thousand times so that I can go into greater raptures and can speak as much nonsense as is appropriate for the most heroic lover created by the best novelist! However, my love, you have already observed my astonishing bent for song as well as my skill therein. Would you be so kind, dearest, as to sing me a little song?"

"Oh," replied Miesmies, "oh, beloved Murr, to be sure I am not inexperienced in the art of song, but you know how it is with

young female singers when they are to perform for the first time before masters and connoisseurs. Fear, embarrassment make their throats tighten, and the most beautiful tones, trills, and mordents stick in their throats in the most dreadful way like fish bones. It is then quite impossible to sing an aria, so for this reason it is the rule to begin with a duet. Let us try a little duet, dearest, if you would like to." That was agreeable to me. We immediately sang the tender duet "My heart flew to you at the first glance," etc., etc. Miesmies began timidly, but soon my powerful falsetto encouraged her. Her voice was very charming, her style rounded, gentle, tender; in short, she revealed herself as a fine singer. I was enchanted, although I realized that my friend Ovid had left me in the lurch again. As Miesmies had done so well with the *cantare,* there was nothing doing with the *chordas tangere,* and so I could not ask for the guitar.

Miesmies now sang the well-known *"Di tanti palpiti"*[64] with rare facility, with unusual expression, and with the greatest elegance. From heroic power in the recitative, she descended to the truly feline sweetness in the andante. The aria seemed written just for her; my heart overflowed and I burst out with a cry of joy. Ha! Miesmies would inspire a world of sensitive tomcats with this aria! Then we sang another duet from a quite new opera with great success, as though it had been written just for us. The divine roulades poured out splendidly from our hearts, as they consisted mostly of chromatic passages. Anyway, I would like to take the opportunity to point out that our race is chromatic, and thus any composer who wishes to write for us would do well to arrange the melody and everything else chromatically. Unfortunately, I have forgotten the name of the excellent master who composed that duet; he is a good, dear man, a composer after my own taste.

While we were singing, a black tomcat appeared and looked at us with gleaming eyes. "Be so good as to keep away, my dear friend," I called to him, "otherwise I will scratch your eyes out and throw you off the roof; but if you would like to sing with us, that will be all right." I knew that the young, black-suited gentleman was an excellent bass and therefore suggested that we sing a composition that I really did not like very much but which was very suitable for the imminent separation from Miesmies. We sang, "Shall I, dearest,

64. Aria from *Tancred* (1813), by Gioacchimo Antonio Rossini (1792–1868).

see you no more!" Scarcely had the black tomcat and I assured her that the gods would preserve me, when a mighty piece of roofing tile was hurled in our midst and a dreadful voice shouted, "Shut up, you damned cats!" Driven by fear, we scattered, dashing wildly into the attic. Oh those heartless barbarians without any feeling for art, who are even unmoved by the most touching complaints of ineffable, amorous sorrow and only hatch revenge, death and destruction!

As stated, that which was to free me from love's pain only plunged me in deeper. Miesmies was so musical that we were able to improvise together very charmingly. At last she learned to sing my own marvelous melodies, which made me completely idiotic and tormented me in my amorous pain to such an extent that I became quite pale, thin, and wretched. Finally, after I had languished sufficiently, the last, although desperate, means of curing me of my love occurred to me. I decided to offer Miesmies my heart and paw. She accepted, and as soon as we were a pair I noticed that my anguish completely vanished. Milk soup and roast meat tasted delicious again; I recovered my jovial humor; my whiskers improved; my fur recovered its former beautiful sheen, since I paid more attention to grooming than before, though on the other hand, my Miesmies did not want to groom herself at all any more. Nevertheless, I completed several more verses to my Miesmies that were all the prettier, all the more truly felt, for I kept intensifying the expression of my tender ravings until the highest pinnacle seemed to have been reached. I finally dedicated to my good lady another thick book, and thus accomplished everything in the literary-esthetic line that can be expected of an upright, sincerely doting cat. Moreover, we led, I and my Miesmies, a calm, domestic, happy life on the straw mat outside my master's door. But what happiness in this world is even of a short duration! I soon noticed that Miesmies was often distracted in my presence, that she answered muddled nonsense when I spoke to her, that deep sighs escaped her, that she only wanted to sing languishing love songs, that she finally acted quite worn and ill. If I asked her then what was wrong with her, she stroked my cheeks and replied, "Nothing, nothing at all, my dear, little papa." But things did not seem right to me. Often I awaited her in vain on the straw mat, sought her in vain in the cellar, in the attic; and if I finally found her and made tender reproaches, she excused herself, saying that her health re-

quired extensive walks and that a tomcat doctor had even recommended a trip to a spa. Again that did not seem right to me. She may well have noticed my hidden irritation, and she made it her business to overwhelm me with caresses; but even in these caresses there was something unusual—I do not know what to call it—that chilled instead of warmed me and that did not seem right to me either. Without guessing that my Miesmies's behavior might have its special reason, I only became aware that the last spark of love for my loveliest one had gradually been extinguished and that deathly boredom gripped me when I was near her. I therefore went my way and she went hers. If we met by chance on the straw mat, we reproached each other lovingly, became the tenderest couple, and praised the domestic peace in which we lived.

It came to pass that the black bass singer came to visit me once in my master's room. He spoke in broken, mysterious phrases, then asked me stormily how I felt about Miesmies. In short, I clearly saw that the black fellow had something on his mind that he wanted to reveal to me. Finally it came out. A young man, who had served in the army, had returned and was living in the neighborhood on a small pension which was tossed him by a restaurant owner in the form of fishbones and garbage. Stunning of figure, with a herculean build, wearing in addition a rich, foreign uniform of black, grey, and yellow, and on his breast the Medal of Honor of Burned Bacon for Bravery won when he cleaned out a whole warehouse of mice with just a few comrades, he had attracted the attention of all the girls and women in the neighborhood. All hearts beat for him when he appeared, bold and brave, his head held high, casting fiery glances in all directions. *That* cat, the black fellow assured me, had fallen in love with my Miesmies, she had responded to his love, and it was only too certain that every night they had secret amorous rendezvous behind the chimney or in the cellar.

"I am surprised," said the black fellow, "I am surprised, my good friend, that with all your sagacity you didn't notice that long ago; but devoted husbands are often blind, and I am sorry that the obligation of friendship requires me to open your eyes, since I know that you are so infatuated with your wife."

"Oh Muzius"—thus the black cat was called—"oh Muzius," I cried. "Am I a fool? Do I love her, the sweet traitoress? I worship her! My whole being belongs to her! No, she cannot do that to me,

the true soul. Muzius, you black slanderer, receive this reward for your dastardly deed!" I raised my paw, claws out; Muzius looked at me in a friendly way and said very calmly, "Do not excite yourself, my good fellow. You share the lot of many excellent people; everywhere there is vile domestic fickleness in the home and, unfortunately, especially among our kind." I let my raised paw sink again, leapt in the air several times in complete despair, and then raged, "Could it be possible! Could it be possible! O heaven! O earth! What else? And shall I couple hell?[65] Who has done this to me? The black, grey and yellow tomcat? And she, my sweet helpmate, formerly loyal and charming—could she, filled with hellish deceit, despise the one who, nestled in her bosom, often blissfully indulged in sweet dreams of love? Flow, ye tears, flow for the ungrateful girl! A thousand curses! It is intolerable! The devil take the gay fellow by the chimney!"

"Do calm yourself," spoke Muzius, "do calm yourself. You are abandoning yourself too much to anger's sudden pain. As your true friend I do not wish to disturb you longer in your pleasant despair. If in your grief you would like to kill yourself, I could help you out with some excellent rat poison; but I do not wish to do that because you are otherwise a dear, charming tomcat, and it would be a shame for you to die. Be comforted; let Miesmies go; there are still many other charming pusses in the world. Adieu, my friend!" With that, Muzius sprang through the open door.

While lying under the stove pondering further the information the tomcat Muzius had given me, I felt something like a secret joy stirring in me. I knew now where I stood with Miesmies, and the torment with that dubious creature was over. Since, for the sake of decency, I had previously expressed a suitable despair, I also believed that that same decency required me to do battle with the black, grey, yellow cat.

I spied on the doting couple at night from behind the chimney and flew fiercely at my rival with the words, "Hellish, bestial traitor!" He, however, being my superior in strength, as I unfortunately noticed too late, seized me, boxed my ears so frightfully that I lost some fur, and then leapt away. Miesmies had fainted; but when I approached her, she leapt away as nimbly as her paramour and followed him into the attic.

65. *Hamlet*, I, v, 92–93.

Crippled, with bloody ears, I crept down to my master and cursed the notion of wanting to save my honor, feeling it no disgrace to abandon Miesmies completely to the black, grey, yellow cat.

"What a vile fate," I thought. "For the sake of a divinely romantic love I am tossed into the gutter, and domestic bliss gets me nothing but a dreadful beating."

The next morning when I stepped out of my master's room, I was not a little surprised to find Miesmies on the straw mat. "Good Murr," she spoke gently and calmly, "I think I feel that I do not love you as much as formerly, which pains me very much."

"Oh dear Miesmies," I replied tenderly. "It lacerates my heart, but I must confess that since that time when certain events took place, you too have become a matter of indifference to me."

"Do not be offended," continued Miesmies. "Do not be offended, sweet friend, but it seems to me that you became intolerable long ago."

"Good heavens!" I cried enthusiastically. "What spiritual empathy! You did too!"

After we had agreed in this way that we were mutually intolerable and that we would have to part forever, we put our paws around each other very tenderly and wept hot tears of joy and rapture!

Then we parted, and from that time on, each was convinced of the excellence and magnanimity of the other and each praised the other to any who would listen.

"I too was in Arcady,"[66] I cried and turned to *belles lettres* and learning more zealously than ever.

(s.p.) "To you," spoke Kreisler, "yes, to you I say from the bottom of my soul, this calm seems to me more threatening than the wildest storm. Everything at court, which Fürst Irenäus has opened like an almanac in duodecimo type with gilt edges, is moving in the thick, heavy sultriness that precedes a violent storm. His Serene Highness, a second Franklin, in vain arranges splendid parties as lightning conductors; the lightning will strike anyhow and perhaps singe his own state dress. It is true, Princess Hedwiga in her whole being is a melody flowing brightly and clearly instead of the usual wild, unruly chords that pour in confusion from her

66. See note 1 above.

wounded breast, but—well—! Hedwiga walks along with a cheerful, radiant pride on the arm of the valiant Neapolitan, and Julia smiles up at him in her charming manner and is pleased with the compliments which the Prince, without turning his head from his designated bride, knows how to bestow on her with such skill that like ricochet shots they must hit a young, inexperienced soul more sharply than if the hostile weapon were fired directly! And yet at first, Benzon told me, Hedwiga had felt oppressed by the *mostro turchino,* and sweet, gentle Julia, that child of heaven, had thought the elegant General-in-Chief an evil basilisk! Oh you prophetic souls! You were right! The devil! Didn't I read in Baumgarten's *World History*[67] that the serpent, who deprived us of Paradise, paraded around in a gold-trimmed scaly jacket? That is what comes to my mind when I see gold-trimmed Hektor. Hektor, by the way, was the name of a very fine bulldog who harbored an indescribable love and loyalty to me. I wish he were with me and I could set him on his royal namesake in coattails when he swaggers along between the charming sisterly pair! Or tell me, Meister, since you know so many tricks, tell me how I might turn myself into a wasp and irritate the royal dog to such an extent that he would become confused!"

"I have," interrupted Meister Abraham, "I have let you talk yourself out, Kreisler; and now I must ask you if you will listen to me calmly if I reveal to you certain things which justify your presentiments?"

"Am I not," replied Kreisler, "am I not a Kapellmeister with a position? I do not mean that in the philosophical sense that I posited my ego as Kapellmeister,[68] but merely refer to my spiritual capacity to stay silent in high society when a flea bites me."

"Well then," continued Meister Abraham, "you must know, Kreisler, that a strange coincidence allowed me to look deeply into the Prince's life. You are right when you compare him to the serpent in Paradise. Under his beautiful shell—this you cannot deny him—lies concealed a poisonous rottenness, I might better say, villainy. He has evil intentions—I know from much of what has happened that he has his eye on the sweet Julia."

67. Siegmund Jakob Baumgarten (1706–57), who translated an English history.

68. A humorous dig at the philosophy of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814).

"Ho ho!" cried Kreisler, jumping around the room. "Ho ho, my fancy bird, are those your sweet songs? Damnation, damnation, the Prince is a fine fellow! He grabs the offered and forbidden fruit with both claws at once! Hola, you sweet Neapolitan, you do not know that a valiant Kapellmeister with considerable music in his body stands at Julia's side; he will treat you, if you approach her, like a damn four-fifths chord that must be resolved. And the Kapellmeister does his job; that is, he will resolve you by sending a bullet through your head or running this sword through your body!" With that, Kreisler pulled the blade out of his cane, assumed a fencing posture, and asked the Meister whether he had the proper posture to run a royal dog through.

"Do be calm," replied Meister Abraham. "Do be calm, Kreisler, there is no need for such heroic deeds to ruin the Prince's game. There are other weapons, and I will give them to you. Yesterday, when I was in the little fisherman's hut, the Prince came by with his adjutant. They did not see me. 'The Princess is lovely,' said the Prince, 'but the little Benzon is divine! My blood seethed when I saw her. Ha! she must be mine, and before I give my hand to the Princess. Do you think that she will refuse?' 'What woman has ever resisted you, Your Grace?' replied the adjutant. 'But damn it,' continued the Prince, 'she seems to be an innocent child.' 'And a naïve one,' the adjutant interrupted, laughing. 'And the innocent, naïve children are the ones who submit patiently when surprised by the attack of a man used to victory, and then they consider everything God's will and even fall deeply in love with the victor! That could happen to you, Your Grace.' 'That would be absurd enough,' cried the Prince. 'But if I could only see her alone—how could that be arranged?' 'Nothing,' replied the adjutant, 'nothing is easier than that. I have noticed that the little girl often strolls in the park. If, now,—' Then their voices died away in the distance; I could not understand anything more. Probably some hellish plan will be carried out today, and it must be spoiled. I could do it myself, but for certain reasons I do not wish to show myself to the Prince at this time; therefore, you, Kreisler, must go at once to Sieghartshof and watch when Julia strolls toward the lake at twilight as is her wont to feed the tame swan. The Italian scoundrel has probably observed this procedure. But take this weapon, Kreisler, and the very necessary instructions so that you may show yourself in battle as a good general against the hostile Prince."

Again the biographer is disturbed at the complete break in the reports from which he must patch together the present story. Would it not have been more appropriate to insert here what instructions Meister Abraham gave the Kapellmeister? For even if the weapon appears later, it will be impossible for you, gentle reader, to understand what is going on. But the unhappy biographer at the moment does not know a single word of those instructions which initiated Kreisler into a quite special secret. But be patient, gentle reader, for a little longer; the said biographer pledges his writing thumb that before the end of the book, this secret will also be revealed.

It must now be related that as soon as the sun began to set, Julia wandered singing through the park to the lake, a basket of white bread on her arm, and stopped in the middle of the bridge, not far from the little fisherman's hut. But Kreisler lay in ambush in the shrubbery, holding a powerful glass to his eyes with the help of which he peered sharply through the bushes which concealed him. The swan was swimming around, and Julia threw it pieces of bread, which it gobbled up greedily. Julia was singing loudly, and so she did not notice Prince Hektor hurrying toward her. When he suddenly stood beside her, she recoiled as in a violent fright. The Prince seized her hand, pressed it to his breast and to his lips, and then leaned over the railing of the bridge very close to Julia. Julia continued to feed the swan, staring at the lake while the Prince talked eagerly. "Do not make such infamously sweet faces, Potentate! Don't you see that I am sitting right in front of you on the slope and that I can give you quite a slap in the face? Oh, Lord, why do your cheeks become more and more scarlet, you dear child of Heaven? Why are you looking at the evil man so strangely? You smile? Yes, it is the glowing poisonous breath before which your heart must open as the bud unfolds its most beautiful leaves before the burning rays of the sun, to die all the sooner!" Kreisler spoke thus while watching the couple whom his spyglass brought so close. The Prince was also throwing pieces of bread into the water, but the swan disdained them and uttered a loud, hostile scream. Then the Prince put his arm around Julia and threw down the pieces of bread in such a way that the swan would believe that Julia was feeding it. At the same time his cheek almost touched Julia's cheek. "That's right," spoke Kreisler, "that's right, gracious rascal. Just grip your booty firmly with your talons,

worthy hawk; but one is waiting here in the shrubbery who has already taken aim at you and will shoot your splendid wings, and then it will go badly with you and your poaching!"

Then the Prince took Julia's arm, and both walked toward the fisherman's hut. But Kreisler emerged from the shrubbery, walked up to the couple, and bowing deeply before the Prince said, "A splendid evening, uncommonly pleasant air, a refreshing aroma. You must feel, Your Grace, as if you were in beautiful Naples."

"Who are you, sir?" the Prince asked him brusquely.

But in the same moment Julia freed herself from his arm, stepped up to Kreisler in a friendly way, offered her hand, and said, "Oh how wonderful, dear Kreisler, that you are here again. Do you know that I have really been longing for you? Indeed, my mother has been scolding me for acting like a badly brought-up, whining child whenever you stay away for several days. I could become ill from vexation if I thought that you were neglecting me or my singing."

"Ha," cried the Prince, casting poisonous glances at Julia and at Kreisler. "Ha, you are Monsieur de Krösel. The Fürst spoke very highly of you."

"Blessed," said Kreisler, his whole face vibrating strangely in hundreds of folds and wrinkles, "blessed be the good gentleman for that, because then perhaps I will succeed in getting that for which I wished to beg you, Serene Prince, namely, your gracious protection. I am so bold as to believe that you directed your favor to me when you first saw me, as you in passing condescended of your own accord to designate me a fool and, since fools are useful for everything imaginable, so—"

"You are," the Prince interrupted him, "a facetious man—"

"Not at all," continued Kreisler, "I certainly love a joke, but only a bad one; and then it is not a joke any more. At the moment I would like to go to Naples and write down some songs by fishermen and bandits heard near the wharf *ad usum delphini*. You are, Gracious Prince, a kind, noble art lover. If you could give me a few recommendations—"

"You are," the Prince interrupted him again, "you are a facetious man, Monsieur de Krösel. I like that. I really like that, but now I do not want to keep you from your walk. Adieu!"

"No, Your Grace," cried Kreisler, "I cannot let the opportunity pass of showing myself to you in my full splendor. You were

about to go into the fisherman's hut; there is a little piano there. Fräulein Julia will indeed be so kind as to sing a duet with me."

"With the greatest pleasure," cried Julia and took Kreisler's arm. The Prince clenched his teeth and walked proudly ahead. While they walked along, Julia whispered in Kreisler's ear, "Kreisler! What is this strange mood?"

"Oh Lord," replied Kreisler just as softly. "Oh Lord, art thou wrapped in such dreamy delusions when the serpent is approaching to kill thee with a poisonous bite?" Julia looked at him with enormous astonishment. Only once before, in a moment of great musical inspiration, had Kreisler addressed her with *thou*.[69]

When the duet was finished, the Prince, who had been shouting *brava, bravissima* frequently during the singing, broke into a storm of applause. He covered Julia's hands with fiery kisses; he swore that never had singing so captivated him, and he begged Julia to allow him to press a kiss on those heavenly lips, across which had flowed a nectar stream of paradisical sounds.

Julia retreated shyly. Kreisler stepped up to the Prince and spoke, "Since you do not wish, Your Grace, to direct even a little word of praise to me, which, as a composer and a fine singer, I believe I have earned just as much as Fräulein Julia, I can see that I do not impress you very strongly with my poor knowledge of music. But I am also skillful in painting and have the honor of showing you a little portrait that depicts a person whose remarkable life and strange end is so familiar to me that I can tell it to anyone who wishes to hear it."

"Bothersome fellow!" murmured the Prince. Kreisler pulled a little box out of his pocket, took a small likeness out of it, and held it up to the Prince. He looked at it and all the blood drained from his face, his eyes stared, his lips trembled; murmuring between his teeth, "*Maledetto!*" he dashed off.

"What's all that about?" cried Julia, frightened to death. "For heaven's sake, what's all that about, Kreisler? Tell me everything."

"A lot of nonsense," replied Kreisler. "Silly pranks, exorcism! Look, dear Fräulein, how the gracious Prince is running across the bridge with the very longest strides of which his legs are capable. Lord, he is acting in a manner quite unlike his sweet, idyllic nature; he is not even looking at the lake; he doesn't want to feed the swan any more, the dear, good—devil!"

69. *Du,* the intimate pronoun of address.

"Kreisler," spoke Julia. "Your tone chills my heart; I fear disaster. What is your business with the Prince?"

The Kapellmeister walked away from the window where he had been standing, looked deeply moved at Julia, who was standing in front of him, her hands folded as if she were praying to the good spirit to remove the fear that was forcing tears from her eyes. "No," said Kreisler, "not a single dissonance shall disturb the harmony of the heaven that dwells in your soul, you innocent child! The spirits of hell traverse the world in hypocritical disguise, but they have no power over you, and you are not to know them and their black deeds! Be calm, Julia! Let me remain silent; everything is now over."

At that moment Benzon came in in great excitement. "What has happened?" she cried. "What has happened? The Prince dashed right by me as if out of his mind without seeing me. Near the palace his adjutant approached him, they spoke together violently, then the Prince, I think, gave his adjutant some important errand, for while the Prince walked into the palace, the adjutant dashed in the greatest haste to the pavilion where he lives. The gardener told me that you had been standing on the bridge with the Prince; I don't know why, but a fearful presentiment that something terrible had happened gripped me. I hurried here; tell me, what has happened?" Julia told her everything. "Secrets?" asked Benzon sharply, casting a piercing look at Kreisler.

"My dearest Rätin," answered Kreisler, "there are moments —positions—situations, I mean, when a person must really keep his mouth shut, because as soon as he opens it, he produces nothing but confusion which irritates sensible people!"

There matters rested, although Benzon seemed offended by Kreisler's silence.

The Kapellmeister accompanied the Rätin and Julia to the palace, then started back toward Sieghartsweiler. As soon as he had disappeared in the shady walks of the park, the Prince's adjutant stepped out of the pavilion and went the same way as Kreisler. Shortly after, there was a shot deep in the forest!

The Prince left Sieghartsweiler that same night; he made his excuses to the Fürst in writing and promised a speedy return. When the gardener searched the park with his men the following morning, he found Kreisler's hat with traces of blood on it. Kreisler, himself, had vanished. Someone—

Book Two

3

My Months of Apprenticeship

The Caprices of Fortune

(M.c.) Yearning and hot desire fill the heart; but when one has with difficulty and sorrow finally attained that for which he strove, all desire is promptly paralyzed by an icy-cold indifference, and one tosses away one's achievement as if it were a broken toy; and scarcely has one done that when bitter regret follows the hasty deed, one strives anew, and thus life hurries by in yearning and nausea. Thus the feline. This term is a correct designation of my species, to which the proud lion also belongs, whom the famous Hornvilla in Tieck's *Octavian*[1] calls a great cat. I repeat, thus and only thus is the cat, and the feline heart is a very fickle thing.

The first obligation of the honorable biographer is to be honest and on no account to spare himself. Therefore, I want to confess quite honestly, paw on heart, that in spite of the immense zeal with which I devoted myself to the arts and learning, the thought of the lovely Miesmies often crossed my mind suddenly and completely interrupted my studies.

It seemed to me as if I should not have left her, as if I had rejected a devoted heart that was only momentarily dazzled by a false illusion. Ah, often, when I wished to find delight in the great Pythagoras (I was studying a lot of mathematics at that time), a delicate black-stockinged little paw suddenly pushed away all the hypotenuses and sides of the triangles, and she appeared before me, my charming Miesmies, her sweet little velvet cap on her head;

1. *Kaiser Octavianus* (1804), a comedy in which Tieck invokes the "moon-drenched magic night" and the "marvelous world of the fairytale."

and there glowed in her charming grass-green eyes a sparkling glance of the tenderest reproof. What delightful little leaps; what graceful twitchings and twirlings of her tail! I was about to put my paws around her in love's newly inflamed rapture, but the provocative illusion vanished.

It was inevitable that such reveries from the Arcady of love caused me to sink into a real melancholy that was damaging to my chosen career of poet and scholar, especially since this mood soon deteriorated into a laziness I was unable to combat. I wanted to force myself out of this wretched condition, to make a rash decision to seek out Miesmies again; but scarcely had I placed my paw on the first step of the staircase to climb up to the upper regions where I might expect to find the charmer, when shame and shyness overcame me and I withdrew my paw and crept sadly under the stove.

In spite of these physical afflictions, I rejoiced in an extraordinary physical well-being; I increased noticeably, if not in knowledge, at least in stoutness, and observed with satisfaction when I looked in my mirror that my moon-cheeked face, besides having a youthful freshness, was beginning to have a commanding expression.

Even my master noticed my changed mood. It is true that I formerly used to purr and jump merrily about when he gave me tasty tidbits, that I used to scamper and tumble around his feet, and even to jump on his lap in the morning after he rose and called out, "Good morning, Murr!" Now I stopped doing all that and contented myself with a friendly meow and that proud elevation of the back which is known to the gentle reader as arching. I even despised the game of bird which had formerly been dear to me. It might be instructive to young gymnasts and tumblers of my race to explain this game. My master tied one or two feather pens to a long string and jerked them up and down in the air to simulate flying. Crouching in the corner and estimating their speed, I would jump at the feathers until I caught them and bravely pulled them to pieces. I was often quite carried away by the game; I really thought the feathers were a bird; I got hot and inflamed, so that my mind and body, both being taxed, developed and became strong. Now I despised even this game and remained quietly on my cushion no matter how often my master made the feathers fly. "Cat," said my master to me one day when I merely reached out my paw whenever the feathers grazed my nose or flew

onto my cushion. "Cat, you are not at all like yourself. You are getting more sluggish and lazy every day. I believe you are eating and sleeping too much."

A ray of light entered my mind at these words of my master! I had attributed my languid melancholy to my thoughts of Miesmies, to the forfeited paradise of love; but now I saw that it was my earthy existence which had asserted its claims and alienated me from my lofty studies. There are things in nature which make it evident that the enchained psyche must sacrifice its freedom to that tyrant called the body. I count quite especially among these things that delicious mixture of farina, sweet milk, and butter as well as that big cushion which is well upholstered with horsehair. My master's servant prepared that sweet mixture so superbly that I devoured two large dishes of it for breakfast every morning. But when I ate that much for breakfast, then learning did not taste good at all; it seemed to me to be dry food, and it was the same when, abandoning my studies, I delved into poetry. The highly valued works of the latest authors, the most famous tragedies by celebrated poets could not hold my attention. I would fall into a vague reverie. Unconsciously my master's skillful cook would compete with the author, and it would seem to me as if the former understood a lot better the proper degree and mixture of fats, sweets, and starches than did the latter. An unfortunate, dreamy confusion of spiritual and physical pleasures! Yes, I can call this confusion dreamy, for dreams appeared and made me seek that second dangerous thing, that big cushion upholstered with horsehair, in order to fall asleep on it. Then the sweet vision of charming Miesmies would appear! Heavens! Probably everything was connected: farina, dislike of knowledge, melancholy, cushion, unpoetical nature, thoughts of love! My master was right; I ate too much and I slept too much! With great stoical seriousness I decided to be more moderate, but the tomcat's nature is weak; the best, the most wonderful decisions are wrecked by the sweet aroma of milk and farina and by the invitingly plump pillow. One day I heard my master say to someone in the corridor when he stepped out of the room, "It is all right as far as I am concerned. Perhaps your company will cheer him up. But don't play any stupid tricks. If you jump on the table or knock over the inkpot or anything else, I will throw you both out."

Thereupon my master opened the door a little and let some-

one in. This someone was none other than my friend Muzius. I scarcely recognized him. His fur, formerly smooth and shining, was rough and dull; his eyes were sunken, and his whole bearing, which had formerly been somewhat coarse but quite tolerable, had acquired arrogance and brutality. "Well," he snorted at me, "well, there you are! Must one look for you behind your damned stove? With your permission." He walked to my plate and consumed the baked fish which I had saved for supper. "Tell me," he said, "where in the devil have you been hiding? Why don't you come up on the roof any more; why do you hide from all the fun?"

I explained that after I had renounced my love for the charming Miesmies, I had devoted myself exclusively to learning, and so had no time for walks. I did not long for company at all, because I had everything at my master's that my heart could desire, milk and farina, meat, fish, a soft bed, etc. A quiet, carefree life was the greatest blessing for a cat of my disposition and talents, and I was really afraid that if I went out, all this might be lost, since I unfortunately realized that my predilection for little Miesmies was not quite extinguished, and seeing her again might easily precipitate me to actions that I would later deeply regret.

"You might get me another fish later," said Muzius, casually wiping his mouth, whiskers, and ears with his paw as he lay down right next to me on the cushion.

"Consider," Muzius began in a soft voice and manner after he had purred a few seconds as a sign of his satisfaction. "Consider it a piece of good fortune, my dear brother Murr, that I got the notion of visiting you in your cell and that your master let me in without any argument. You are in the greatest danger that a fine young fellow of a tomcat who has brains in his head and strength in his body can get into. I mean, you are in danger of becoming a really dreadful philistine. You say that you are applying yourself to learning too rigorously to have time to join other tomcats. Excuse me, brother, that is not true. I find you plump, polished, and glossy, not at all like a bookworm, but like a lucubrator.[2] Believe me, it is that damned comfortable life that is making you lazy and sluggish. You would feel quite differently if you had to work till

2. A lucubrator is a nocturnal student, one who works by artificial light. Muzius probably means a Lucullian person. Licinius Lucullus was a wealthy Roman famous for the luxury of his banquets.

you were exhausted like the rest of us to snatch a few fishbones or catch a little bird."

"I thought, old man," I interrupted my friend, "that your situation could be called good and happy. Formerly you were—"

"About that," Muzius flared up angrily, "about that, another time. Do not address me familiarly until we have drunk *Schmollis*[3] together. But you are a philistine and do not understand student customs."

After I tried to apologize to my angry friend, he continued more placidly. "Well, as I said, your way of life is no good, brother Murr. You must get out, out into the world."

"Heavens," I cried in alarm. "What are you saying, brother Muzius? I should go out in the world? Have you forgotten what I told you in the cellar several months ago about how I once jumped out of an English chaise into the world? About the dangers that threatened me on all sides? How good Ponto finally saved me and brought me back to my master?"

Muzius laughed maliciously. "Yes," he said, "yes, that's just it; that's the point. The 'good' Ponto! That foppish, supercilious, idiotic, proud hypocrite who assisted you because he didn't have anything better to do just then, because it amused him, and who, if you sought him out at his exclusive parties, would not even recognize you, and who would bite you and chase you away because you are not of his kind! That 'good' Ponto, instead of introducing you to the true world, entertained you with silly human stories! No, dear Murr, that incident showed you a quite different world from the one in which you belong. You can take my word for it that all your solitary studying will not help you at all and is actually harmful. You will remain a philistine, and there is nothing more boring or tasteless in the whole world than a scholarly philistine!"

I confessed to my friend Muzius quite honestly that I did not quite comprehend the actual meaning of the expression "philistine." "My brother," replied Muzius, smiling charmingly so that he looked quite handsome at that moment and seemed quite the old Muzius again. "My brother Murr! The attempt to explain all

3. When students pledge friendship, they drink a toast and shout *"Schmollis!"*. They then address each other with the informal pronoun. Murr had used the informal pronoun *du*.

this would be quite vain, for you would never understand what a philistine is as long as you are one. If you would be content for the moment with several basic characteristics of a cat philistine, I can—"

(s.p.)—a very strange performance. Princess Hedwiga was standing in the middle of the room. Her face was pale as death, her expression was fixed. Prince Ignatius was playing with her as if she were a flexible doll. He pushed her arm up, which stayed up and sank only when he pulled it down. He pushed her forward gently, she moved; he stopped her, she stood still; he pushed her into a chair, she sat. The Prince was so engrossed in the game that he did not notice people coming in.

"What are you doing, Prince?" the Fürstin cried out. He protested, giggling and rubbing his hands happily, that sister Hedwiga had become so nice and good and was doing everything he wished, not contradicting him or scolding him as she usually did. And then he began again to move the Princess into various positions as he uttered military commands, and each time when she stayed as if enchanted in those positions, he laughed loudly and jumped for joy. "That is past all endurance," said the Fürstin softly in a trembling voice, while tears glittered in her eyes. The doctor stepped up to the Prince and cried in a commanding voice, "Stop that, Your Grace!" Then he lifted the Princess in his arms and placed her gently on the sofa which was in the room and closed the curtains. "There is," he turned then to the Fürstin, "there is at the moment nothing that the Princess needs more than complete quiet. I beg the Prince to leave the room."

Prince Ignatius began to behave very badly and complained with sobs that all sorts of people now who weren't Princes or even of the nobility were presuming to contradict him. He wanted to stay with his Princess sister, whom he loved even more than his most beautiful cups, and the doctor could not order him around.

"Go, dear Prince," said the Fürstin gently. "Go to your room. The Princess must sleep now, and after dinner Fräulein Julia is coming."

"Fräulein Julia!" cried the Prince, laughing and hopping around like a child. "Fräulein Julia! Ha, that is great! I'll show her my new etchings and how I am depicted as Prince Salmon with the great order in the story of the Water King!" Then he kissed the

Fürstin's hand ceremoniously and with a proud look gave his hand to the doctor for a kiss. Instead the doctor took the Prince by the hand and led him to the door, which he opened, bowing politely. The Prince allowed himself to be shown out in this way.

The Fürstin sank down in an armchair, exhausted and full of pain. She rested her head in her hands and spoke softly to herself in an expression of deepest sorrow. "What mortal sin rests on me that Heaven punishes me so harshly. This son, doomed to eternal childhood—and now—Hedwiga—my Hedwiga!" The Fürstin became lost in sad and mournful brooding.

Meanwhile the doctor had, with some difficulty, given the Princess a few drops of some beneficial medicine and then had summoned the ladies-in-waiting. Since the Princess's cataleptic behavior was not changed in the least, they took her to her room after they had received the directive from the doctor to call him immediately if the slightest change came over the Princess.

"Your Highness," the doctor turned to the Fürstin, "however strange, however worrisome the Princess's condition may seem to be, I believe that I can definitely assure you that this state will pass and will not have any dangerous consequences. The Princess is suffering from that quite peculiar kind of rigid convulsion which occurs so rarely that many very famous doctors never once in their lives have the opportunity to observe it. I must therefore really consider myself lucky—" The doctor hesitated.

"Ha," said the Fürstin in a bitter tone, "I recognize the practical doctor who ignores boundless sorrow if he can only enrich his knowledge."

"Just," continued the doctor ignoring the Fürstin's reproach, "just a short time ago I found in a scientific book the example of a condition which resembles the one to which the Princess succumbed. A lady (so my author relates) went from Vesoul to Besançon to take care of a lawsuit. The importance of the affair and the thought that the loss of the case would be the last and worst of all the disagreeable things that had happened to her and would cast her into want and misery filled her with the liveliest distress and increased the tenseness of her feelings. She spent sleepless nights, ate little; she was seen in church prostrating herself and praying in an unusual manner; in short, her abnormal condition revealed itself in various ways. Finally, on the same day that her lawsuit was to be decided, she had what those present thought

was a stroke. The doctors, who had been summoned, found her upright in an armchair, her sparkling eyes directed skywards, her eyelids open and immobile, her arms raised and her hands folded. Her face, which previously had been pale and sad, was rosier and happier than before; her breathing easy and regular; her pulse gentle, slow, quite sound, almost like that of a person peacefully asleep. Her limbs were flexible and could be arranged in any position without her resisting in the least. What really indicated her illness and the impossibility of fakery was the fact that her limbs did not move of their own accord out of the position in which they were placed. When her chin was pressed down, her mouth opened and remained open. First one arm was raised and then the other; they did not fall back. They were pushed backwards, then elevated in such a way that it would have been impossible for anyone to stay long in that position, and yet that is what happened. No matter how far forward her body was bent, it kept its balance. She seemed to be quite without any sensitivity; she was shaken, pinched, pricked; her feet were put in a dish of hot coals; someone shouted in her ear that she would win her lawsuit; all in vain—there was no sign of consciousness. Gradually she came to, but she talked disconnectedly. Finally—"

"Continue," said the Fürstin when the doctor stopped. "Continue. Do not conceal anything from me, no matter how terrible it is. It is true, isn't it? The lady became insane!"

"It suffices," continued the doctor, "it suffices to add that the lady's condition only remained critical for four days, that she recovered completely in Vesoul when she returned there, and suffered no evil consequences from her unusual, severe illness."

The Fürstin became absorbed again in melancholy thoughts, and the doctor elaborated on the medicinal remedies with which he intended to help the Princess and finally got as involved in scientific explanations as if he were addressing a professional meeting of very learned doctors.

"What," the Fürstin interrupted the loquacious doctor, "what good are all these scientific remedies when the health and well-being of the spirit is in danger?"

The doctor remained silent for a few moments, then continued: "Gracious lady, the example of the strange catalepsy of that lady in Besançon shows that the basis of her illness had a psychical cause. When she recovered consciousness, her cure was begun by

encouraging her and pretending the evil lawsuit had been won. The most experienced doctors agree that some unexpected and violent emotion produces that condition. Princess Hedwiga is sensitive to the highest degree; I might even say that the organism of her nervous system in itself is abnormal. It seems certain that some violent emotional shock caused her illness. One must seek to find out the cause to be able to treat her psychically with success! Prince Hektor's sudden departure. Well, gracious lady, a mother might perhaps see more than the doctor and could give him the best remedy for her cure."

The Fürstin rose and said coldly and proudly, "Even an ordinary woman likes to guard certain intimate feminine secrets. The royal house reveals its soul only to the Church and its servants, among whom the doctor may not count himself."

"What!" cried the doctor with spirit. "Who can separate physical health so sharply from spiritual well-being? The doctor is a second father confessor. He must be allowed glimpses into the depths of the psychic being, otherwise he will always run the risk of erring. Remember the story of that sick Prince, gracious lady—"

"Enough!" the Fürstin interrupted the doctor almost with displeasure. "Enough! I will never be persuaded to commit anything unseemly; neither can I believe that anything unseemly in the Princess's thoughts or feelings could have caused her illness."

With that, the Fürstin withdrew and left the doctor alone.

"A strange woman," he said to himself, "a strange woman, this Fürstin! She would like to persuade others, even herself, that the cement with which nature welds body and soul together is a special kind for royalty and not at all like that used for us poor ordinary mortals. One is not supposed to believe that the Princess has a heart, like that royal Spaniard who refused a present of some silk stockings that a good Dutch citizen wished to give to his Queen, because it was improper to admit that a Spanish Queen really has legs like ordinary people! And yet I would like to wager that it is in her heart, the laboratory of all feminine misery, that the cause of the very royal nervous illness which attacked the Princess is to be sought."

The doctor thought about Prince Hektor's sudden departure, the Princess's excessively abnormal sensitivity, the passionate manmer in which she supposedly had behaved toward the Prince (that

was what he had heard); and it seemed certain to him that some kind of lover's quarrel had wounded the Princess to the point of sudden illness. It will be seen whether the doctor's suspicions had a basis or not. As to the Fürstin, she may have suspected something like that and therefore considered all the doctor's questioning improper, since the court rejected all deeper emotions as unsuitable and common. The Fürstin really had a heart and soul; but that strange, half-ridiculous, half-repulsive monster called etiquette had settled on her breast like a fearful nightmare, and neither a sigh nor any sign of emotion was supposed to escape her heart. Therefore, she had to manage to recover from such scenes as had just occurred between the Princess and the Prince and to reject proudly the person who only wanted to help.

While this was taking place at the palace, a lot was occurring in the park that must be related here.

The plump Court Chamberlain was standing in the shrubbery at the left of the entrance; he took out a small, gold box from his pocket, polished it a couple of times with his sleeve after he had taken a pinch of snuff from it, handed it to the Fürst's valet, and spoke as follows: "Valued friend, I know that you like such nice little knickknacks. Accept this little box as a small token of my gracious good will on which you can always count. But tell me, my friend, what happened on that strange, unusual walk?"

"I thank you most humbly," replied the valet, pocketing the golden box. Then he cleared his throat and continued. "I can assure you, Your Excellency, that our gracious Fürst has been most concerned since that moment when Princess Hedwiga lost, one knows not how, her five senses. Today she stood upright for about half an hour by the window and drummed with the gracious fingers of her right hand on the window pane so violently that it rattled and clattered. But only nice marches that were melodically fresh and charming, as my deceased brother-in-law, the court trumpeter, used to say. Your Excellency knows that my deceased brother-in-law, the court trumpeter, was a skillful man; he produced his low C like a wizard, his little C and G sounded like the nightingale's song, and as for his trumpet technique—"

"All that," the Court Chamberlain interrupted the chatterbox, "all that, I know, my dear fellow! Your deceased brother-in-law was an excellent court trumpeter. But now, what did His

Highness do and say when Hedwiga stopped drumming out marches?"

"Do! Say!" continued the valet. "Hm! Not very much. His Highness turned around, stared at me with very fiery eyes, pulled the bell in a fearful manner, and called loudly, 'François—François!' 'Your Grace, I'm already here!' I cried. But His Grace said quite angrily, 'Donkey, why didn't you say so immediately!' And then, 'My walking outfit!' I did as commanded. His Grace deigned to wear his green silk coat without a star and went to the park. He forbade me to follow him but—Your Excellency, one has to know where the Fürst is, in case of an accident— Well! I followed him from a distance and observed that His Grace went to the fisherman's hut."

"To Meister Abraham!" cried the Court Chamberlain quite surprised. "That is right," said the valet and made a very important, mysterious face.

"To the fisherman's hut," repeated the Court Chamberlain, "to the fisherman's hut, to Meister Abraham! His Grace has never sought out the Meister in the fisherman's hut!"

An ominous silence followed; then the Court Chamberlain continued. "And otherwise His Grace said nothing?"

"Nothing at all," replied the valet significantly. "But," he continued, smiling slyly, "a window of the fisherman's hut faces the dense shrubbery; there is a hollow there; one can understand every word that is spoken in the little hut. One could—"

"My good fellow, if you would do that!" cried the Court Chamberlain enchanted.

"I will do it," said the valet and slipped quietly away. But when he stepped out of the thicket, the Fürst, who was just returning to the palace, appeared right in front of him, almost touching him. He recoiled with timid respect.

"Vous êtes un grand blockhead!" the Fürst roared at him, called out a cold *"Dormez bien"* to the Court Chamberlain, and retired to the castle with his valet following him.

The Court Chamberlain stopped aghast, murmuring, "Fisherman's hut—Meister Abraham—*dormez bien*—" and decided to go at once to the Imperial Chancellor to discuss the extraordinary occurrence with him and if possible to discover the constellation that could produce these events at court.

Meister Abraham had accompanied the Fürst to the thicket where the Court Chamberlain and the valet were and had then gone back at the command of the Prince, who did not want anyone to see him from the palace windows in the company of the Meister. The gentle reader knows how well the Fürst succeeded in concealing his secret visit to Meister Abraham. And still another person besides the valet had observed the Fürst without the latter suspecting it.

Meister Abraham had almost reached his dwelling when Rätin Benzon quite unexpectedly walked up to him from the path, where it was already beginning to get dark.

"Ha!" cried Benzon with a bitter laugh, "the Fürst has gotten advice from you, Meister Abraham. Indeed, you are the true support of the royal house; you let your wisdom and experience flow toward father and son, and when good advice is needed or unobtainable—"

"Then," Meister Abraham interrupted Benzon, "then there is a Rätin, who is actually the resplendent star that illuminates everything here and under whose influence even a poor old organ builder can exist and live out his simple life undisturbed."

"Do not jest," said Benzon, "do not jest so bitterly, Meister Abraham. A star that shines brightly can quickly fade when it approaches the horizon where it will vanish. The strangest occurrences seem to crisscross each other in this solitary family circle which a little town and the couple of dozen people who live there are accustomed to call a 'court.' The sudden departure of the ardently awaited groom—Hedwiga's ominous condition! This might actually deeply depress the Fürst if he were not a man completely lacking in feeling."

"You were not," Meister Abraham interrupted Benzon, "you were not always of this opinion, Frau Rätin."

"I do not understand you," said Benzon contemptuously, giving the Meister a piercing glance and then hastily averting her face.

Fürst Irenäus had, in a feeling of confidence which he harbored for Meister Abraham and for the intellectual superiority which he conceded him, put aside all royal scruples and had poured out his whole heart in the fisherman's hut but had remained silent about all of the comments that Benzon had made about the day's disturbing events. Meister Abraham knew that, and so he was not surprised at the Rätin's sensitivity, although he wondered that she,

who was so cold and reserved, was not able to conceal this sensitivity any better.

It was probably deeply painful to the Rätin to see the monopoly of her tutelage of the Fürst, which she had taken upon herself, endangered again in a critical, fateful moment.

For reasons which will perhaps be clearly developed later, the union of Princess Hedwiga with Prince Hektor was the Rätin's most ardent wish. This union was at a critical point, or so she believed; and any interference by a third person in this affair seemed ominous to her. In addition, she saw herself, for the first time, surrounded by puzzling secrets; for the first time the Fürst was silent. Could she, who was accustomed to direct the whole performance at the imaginary court, be more deeply insulted?

Meister Abraham knew that there is no better way to oppose an excited woman than with indomitable calm, so he spoke not a word but walked along silently next to Benzon who, deep in thought, had turned toward that bridge which the gentle reader is already acquainted with. Leaning on the railing, the Rätin stared at the distant thickets, on which the sinking sun, as if in farewell, cast golden, glittering glances.

"A lovely evening," said the Rätin without turning around.

"Certainly," replied Meister Abraham, "certainly. Silent, calm, cheerful like an innocent, undisturbed spirit."

"You cannot," the Rätin continued, adopting a more formal tone, "you cannot reproach me, my dear Meister, for feeling painfully affected if the Fürst suddenly makes only *you* his confidant, asks only *you* for advice about an affair about which a woman of the world can actually better advise and decide. But the petty irritation which I could not conceal is past, quite past. I am quite composed, since only the form was violated. The Fürst ought to have told me himself everything that I have discovered in another way; and actually I approve highly of everything, dear Meister, that you said to him. I will even confess that I did something that is not very laudable. It was not mere feminine curiosity but the deepest concern for everything that touches this royal family that excuses it. You must know, Meister, that I have been eavesdropping, have overheard your entire conversation with the Fürst, and have understand every word—"

A strange feeling, a mixture of scornful irony and deep bitterness possessed Meister Abraham at Benzon's words. Meister

Abraham had noticed just as clearly as the valet that one could hide in the bushes under the window of the fisherman's hut and hear every word that was spoken inside. But he had succeeded by a clever acoustical contrivance in arranging matters so that conversation in the hut would sound like a confused, incomprehensible noise to anyone standing outside, and thus it was literally impossible to distinguish a single syllable. It must, therefore, have seemed pitiful to the Meister that Benzon had to take refuge in a lie to learn secrets which she, but not the Fürst, could suspect and which the latter, therefore, could not have entrusted to Meister Abraham. It will be learned what the Fürst was discussing with the Meister in the fisherman's hut.

"Oh," cried the Meister, "oh, madame, it was the nimble mind of a worldly, enterprising lady which led you to the little fisherman's hut. How can I, a poor, old, inexperienced man understand all these matters without your assistance? I was about to tell you in great detail everything the Fürst confided to me, but there is no need for any further explanations, since you already know everything. Would you, dear lady, consider me worthy enough to discuss with me openly everything that seems to be a lot worse than it really is?"

Meister Abraham struck the note of honest friendliness so well that Benzon, with all her perspicacity, could not decide whether he was mystifying her or not; and her confusion cut off that thread which she could have seized and tied into a fatal noose for the Meister. And so, grappling in vain for words, she stopped on the bridge as if spellbound and looked down at the lake.

The Meister feasted his eyes on her anguish for a few moments, but then his thoughts turned to the events of the day. He well knew Kreisler's role in the center of those events; a deep sorrow at the loss of his dearest friend overcame him and unconsciously the cry escaped him, "Poor Johannes!"

Then Benzon turned quickly to the Meister and spoke with sudden vehemence. "Well, Meister Abraham, you are not so foolish as to believe in Kreisler's demise? What can a bloody hat prove? What could have suddenly brought him to the terrible decision to kill himself? He would have been found, anyway."

The Meister was not a little astounded to hear Benzon talking of suicide, when quite a different suspicion seemed to be stirring; but before he could reply, the Rätin continued. "It is lucky for us,

lucky for us, that he is gone, that unfortunate man who only causes trouble wherever he appears. His passionate nature, his bitterness —with no other words can I designate that highly rated humor— infects every sensitive person with whom he plays his cruel games. If his cynical contempt for all conventional relations, his defiance of the customary forms, bears witness to a superior intelligence, then we must all bend our knees before this Kapellmeister; but he should leave us in peace and not attack everything that is recognized as a correct, realistic view of life and as the basis of our contentment. Therefore! Heaven be praised that he is gone; I hope never to see him again."

"And yet," said the Meister gently, "and yet, you were formerly the friend of my Johannes, Frau Rätin; and didn't you befriend him at an evil, critical time, and didn't you yourself direct him onto that path from which those conventional attitudes, which you are so zealously defending, had enticed him? Why this sudden reproach of my good Kreisler now? What evil has been exposed in him? Is he to be hated because at that moment when chance cast him into a new arena the world became a hostile place, because destruction threatened him, because—an Italian bandit was slinking after him?"

The Rätin winced visibly at these words. "What," she said then in a trembling voice, "what hellish thought do you harbor in your breast, Meister Abraham? But if it were so, if Kreisler had really been killed, in that moment the bride whom he ruined would be avenged. An inner voice tells me that Kreisler alone is responsible for the Princess's frightful condition. Without mercy, he stretched the inner strings of the soul of the sick girl until they snapped."

"Then," replied Meister Abraham venomously, "then the Italian gentleman was a man of quick decision who avenged the deed before it occurred. You have heard, gracious lady, everything that I spoke about with the Fürst in the fisherman's hut, so that you also know that in the same moment that the shot was fired, Princess Hedwiga fell into a rigid trance."

"Truly," said Benzon, "one is supposed to believe in all that imaginary nonsense that is dished up nowadays—psychical affinities and the like! But, once again, we are lucky that he is gone; the Princess's condition can and will change. Fate has driven away the disturber of our peace and—admit it, Meister Abraham—isn't our

friend inwardly so lacerated that life can no longer give him peace? Granted really that—"

The Rätin did not finish, for Meister Abraham felt his anger, which he suppressed with difficulty, flare up.

"What," he cried in a rising voice, "what do you all have against this Johannes? What evil has he ever done you that you will not grant him a refuge, a little place in this world? You don't know? Well then, I will tell you. You see, Kreisler does not wear your colors, he does not understand your idiom; the chair which you set out so that he may sit with you is too small, too narrow for him. You cannot regard him as one of yourselves, and that angers you. He does not wish to recognize the eternity of the treaties which you have drawn up for the organization of life; yes, he thinks that a gross delusion under which you labor prevents you from seeing reality and that the solemnity with which you believe to rule over a kingdom which you cannot fathom appears very humorous—and you call all that bitterness. Above all things, he loves the jest which arises from a deeper observation of human existence and which can be called nature's loveliest gift and which nature creates from the purest source of its being. But you are distinguished, serious people and do not wish to jest. The spirit of true love dwells in him; but can it warm a heart that is frozen for all eternity, in which, indeed, there never was the spark which that spirit can inflame? You do not like Kreisler because that feeling of superiority that you are forced to concede to him is an uncomfortable one and because you fear the man who traffics in matters higher than those that fit exactly into your sphere."

"Meister," said Benzon in a somber voice, "Meister Abraham, the zeal with which you speak for your friend has carried you too far. You wanted to wound me? Well, you have succeeded, for you have aroused thoughts in me that have slumbered for a long, long time! Do you call my heart frozen? Do you know whether the spirit of love ever spoke to it, whether I found comfort and peace not alone in the conventional relationships that the eccentric Kreisler finds contemptuous? Don't you really know, old man, you who have probably also experienced much sorrow, that it is a dangerous game to set yourself up above convention and to try to approach closer to the world spirit in the mystifying of one's own being? I know Kreisler has accused me of leading the coldest, most rigid, prosaic life, and it is his opinion you are pronouncing when you

call me cold; but have you ever tried to see through this ice which has long been a protective armor around my heart? It may be that in men love does not create life but only places it on a pinnacle from which safe roads lead downward; but *our* true focus, which creates and shapes our whole being, is the moment of first love. If a hostile fate wills that this moment be missed, all life is missed for the weak woman, who founders in sorry insignificance, while the one endowed with a stronger spirit pulls herself up by her own strength and establishes a position in life's ordinary relationships which provides peace and quiet. Let me tell you, old man—here, in the darkness of night, which veils confidences, let me tell you about it! When that moment in my life occurred, when I saw *the* man who kindled in me all the fire of the deepest love of which the feminine heart is capable—at that moment I was standing before the altar with that Benzon who became a good husband like none other. His complete unimportance gave me everything that I could desire for leading a peaceful existence, and never did a complaint or a reproach escape my lips. I only aspired to the ordinary life; and if then, even in this sphere, much occurred that led me astray, if I can only offer the pressure of the moment as an excuse for much that might seem blameworthy, let *that* woman first condemn me who, like me, has fought through that battle which leads to complete renunciation of all higher happiness, even if that should be nothing other than a sweet, dreamy illusion. Fürst Irenäus made my acquaintance. But I will remain silent about what occurred a long time ago. We will only talk about the present. I have allowed you to look into my inner being, Meister Abraham. You know now why, as things are shaping themselves here, I must fear as threatening any intervention by an unfamiliar, exotic principle. In that fatal hour my own destiny smirks at me like a fearful, admonitory ghost. I must save those who are dear to me; I have made my plans. Meister Abraham, do not oppose me, or if you wish to do battle with me, watch out that I don't destroy your best conjurer's tricks!"

"Unhappy woman!" cried Meister Abraham.

"You call me unhappy," replied Benzon, "me, who knew how to defeat a hostile fate and who attained peace and satisfaction when all seemed lost?"

"Unhappy woman," cried Meister Abraham again in a tone which revealed his inner emotion. "Poor, unhappy woman. You

think you have attained peace and satisfaction, and you did not suspect that it was despair which, like a volcano, released all the flaming passion from your heart; and you now stubbornly believe that the dead ashes, from which no blossom, no flower can sprout, are the rich field of life which will still dispense you fruit. You wish to erect an artificial building on the foundation stone which a flash of lightning could pulverize, and you are not afraid of its collapsing in that moment when gay colored banners are waving from the wreath of flowers which announces the success of the master builder? Julia—Hedwiga—I know those plans were cleverly woven for them! Unhappy woman, beware lest that baleful feeling, that real bitterness of which you unjustly accuse my Johannes, does not come from the depths of your own real self and that your wise plans are really nothing but hostility to a happiness that you never enjoyed and that you now begrudge those you love. I know more about your plans than you may think, more of your famous compromises with life that are supposed to give you peace and which lured you to culpable disgrace!"

A hollow, inarticulate cry, which Benzon uttered at these final words of the Meister, betrayed her violent emotion. The Meister stopped, but as Benzon also remained silent, not stirring from the spot, he continued calmly, "I do not have the least desire to do battle with you, my lady! But as to my supposed magic tricks, you know very well, dearest Frau Rätin, that since the day my Invisible Maiden left me—" At that moment remembrance of his lost Chiara seized the Meister with a power he had not felt for a long time; he thought he saw her shape in the dim distance and he thought he heard her sweet voice. "Oh Chiara! My Chiara!" he called in agonizing sorrow.

"What is it," said Benzon turning around quickly, "what is it, Meister Abraham! What name did you call? But once more, let the past rest; do not judge me according to those strange views that you share with Kreisler; promise me not to misuse that confidence which Fürst Irenäus reposed in you; promise me not to oppose my actions."

Meister Abraham was so lost in painful thoughts of his Chiara that he scarcely heard what the Rätin was saying and was only able to answer with unintelligible words.

"Do not," continued the Rätin, "do not reject me, Meister Abraham. You really seem to be better informed than I supposed,

but it is possible that I, too, am still guarding secrets that could be very valuable to you, that I could perhaps do you a favor. Let us together rule this little court which indeed needs apron strings. 'Chiara,' you cried with an expression of pain which—" A loud noise from the palace interrupted Benzon. Meister Abraham awoke from his dreams; the noise—

(M.c.)—impart the following. A philistine cat, no matter how thirsty he is, begins to lick up a saucer of milk at the edge so that he won't get milk on his nose and whiskers and will stay decent-looking, because good manners are more important to him than thirst. If you should call on a philistine cat, he will offer you all sorts of things; but when you leave, he will assure you, however, only of his friendship and afterwards eat alone and in secret the tidbits that he offered you. A philistine cat, by virtue of an unerring sense, knows how to find the best place in the attic, the cellar, etc., where he will stretch out as comfortably and as much at ease as possible. He talks a lot about his good qualities and that, thank heaven, he cannot complain that fate overlooks those good qualities. He explains to you in many words how he happened to find this good place which he preempted and all the things that he is going to do to improve his situation. If you want to say anything about your own inferior fate, the philistine cat immediately closes his eyes, flattens his ears, perhaps pretends that he is sleeping, or he purrs. A philistine cat licks his fur until it is clean and shining, and even when hunting mice never walks across a wet spot without shaking his paws at every step, so that, even if the mouse is lost, he is on all occasions, a good, respectable, well-dressed person. A philistine cat fears and shuns the least danger, and, if you should find yourself in danger and should ask for help, regrets, with the holiest avowal of friendly sympathy, that just at this moment his situation and obligations do not allow him to assist you. Everything the philistine cat ever does depends on many thousand considerations. For example, he will even remain nice and polite to the little pug dog that bit him very painfully in the tail so that he will not get in wrong with the watchdog whose protection the pug has managed to obtain, but he uses the cover of night to scratch an eye out of that pug. The next day he sympathizes with the pug from the bottom of his heart and reviles the malice of a tricky enemy. These precautions resemble a well-con-

structed burrow, for the philistine cat always has a means of escaping whenever you think you are going to catch him. A philistine cat likes best of all to stay at home under the stove where he feels safe; the open roof makes him dizzy. Now you see, friend Murr, that this is your case. When I now tell you that the cat *Bursch*[4] is candid, honorable, unselfish, loyal, always ready to help his friend, that he knows no other considerations than honor and honesty—in short, that the cat *Bursch* is the complete opposite of the philistine cat, you will not hesitate to rouse yourself from your philistine state and become a valiant cat *Bursch*."

I felt vividly the truth of Muzius's words. I had not known the word philistine, but I recognized the description because I had run across many a philistine, i.e., bad cats whom I heartily despised. Therefore, the delusion that I could belong in the category of those despicable fellows was all the more painful, and I decided to follow Muzius's advice in everything so that I might yet become a fine cat *Bursch*. A young man once spoke to my master about a faithless friend and labeled him with a very strange expression that I did not understand. He called him "a pomaded fellow."[5] Now it seemed to me that the adjective "pomaded" went very well with the noun "philistine," and I asked friend Muzius about it. I had scarcely spoken the word "pomaded" when Muzius leaped up rejoicing and, embracing me vigorously, cried, "Dear boy, now I see that you have understood me. Yes, a pomaded philistine! That is

4. A member of the *Burschenschaft,* the student organization founded at Jena in 1815. Its purpose was to enlist all students in Ludwig Jahn's program of physical education and moral reform. The organization was both violently liberal and patriotic. In 1817 a mammoth demonstration was staged at the Wartburg, the castle where Martin Luther had been in hiding and translated the New Testament. The students burned several reactionary books as well as a queue and a corporal's staff, symbols of absolutism and conservatism. In 1818 delegates from fourteen German universities met at Jena, adopted a constitution, and chose as their colors the black, red, and gold of Major Lützow's "Free Corps," in which students had voluntarily enlisted in the war against Napoleon. But after the murder of the dramatist Kotzebue by a student, Karl Sand, the *Burschenschaft* was dissolved by the government. In 1819 Hoffmann was appointed a member of the *Immediatkommission* which was charged with investigating so-called subversive students. He was not happy with this task and fought bitterly against the arbitrary proceedings of the Chief of Police, Karl von Kamptz. The following parodistic account is based on Hoffmann's experience and shows his basic sympathy towards the students while avoiding difficulty with the strict censorship of the time.

5. The German adjective is *pomadig* and is slang for "easy-going," "lazy."

the despicable creature who opposes noble *Burschentum*[6] and whom we would like to pursue to his death everywhere that we find him. Yes, friend Murr, you have now proved your true inner feeling for all that is noble and great; let me once more press you to this breast where beats a loyal German heart." Friend Muzius embraced me again and explained that he was considering introducing me to the *Burschentum* on the following night. I was to come up on the roof at midnight, and he would take me to a feast that a senior cat, namely, Kater Puff,[7] had arranged.

My master came into the room. As usual I sprang toward him, rubbed against him, and rolled around on the floor to show him my pleasure. Muzius also stared at him with a satisfied expression. After my master had scratched me a little on my head and neck, he looked around the room and said, since he found everything in its proper order, "Now, that is fine! Your conversation has been quiet and orderly as is proper for respectable, well-bred people. That deserves to be rewarded."

My master stepped over to the door that led to the kitchen; and we, Muzius and I, guessing his good intentions, followed him with a happy meow, meow, meow! My master really did open the kitchen cupboard and got out the carcasses and bones of a couple of young chickens, the meat of which he had eaten yesterday. It is well known that my race considers a chicken carcass the tastiest food that there is, and therefore Muzius's eyes gleamed with a bright fire, he wiggled his tail in a charming way, and he purred loudly when my master put the dish on the floor in front of us. Well remembering the pomaded philistine, I pushed the best bits, the necks, the stomachs, the rumps, to Muzius and contented myself with the coarser thigh and wing bones. When we had finished the chickens, I was about to ask my friend Muzius if he would like a saucer of sweet milk. But, the pomaded philistine ever before my eye, I did not ask, instead pushed out the cup which, I knew, was under the cupboard and invited Muzius in a friendly way to lap, while I pledged his health. Muzius drank the milk, then pressed my paw and said, bright tears brimming in his eyes, "Friend Murr, you lead a Lucullan existence; but you have revealed to me

6. The suffix *-tum* is roughly equivalent to the English *-ness* when the latter means "state or quality."

7. *Puff* in German is a vigorous word meaning approximately "bump," "crash," "bang."

your faithful, honest, and noble heart, and therefore the idle vanity of the world will not lead you astray to base *Philistertum*. Thanks, deepest thanks!"

With a true, German pawshake, according to olden custom, we made our farewells. Muzius was off with a breakneck leap out the open window, no doubt to hide the deep emotion which had brought tears to his eyes. This daring leap amazed even me, who am remarkably endowed by nature with skill in leaping; and I found opportunity to laud again my race whose members are born gymnasts and need neither jumping sticks nor climbing poles.[8]

Friend Muzius also showed me that often behind a rough, forbidding exterior there lurks a deep, feeling spirit.

I returned to the room and to my master and lay down under the stove. Here in solitude, contemplating the shape of my existence up to that moment, weighing my most recent mood and my whole manner of life, I became alarmed at the thought of how close I had been to the abyss; and friend Muzius seemed to me, in spite of his rough skin, like a beautiful, redeeming angel. I was to enter a new world; the emptiness in my heart was to be filled; I was to become a different cat. My heart beat in anxious, joyful anticipation.

It was still long before midnight when I begged my master in my usual way, "Meow, meow," to let me out. "Gladly," he replied, opening the door, "gladly, Murr. Nothing comes of lying and sleeping under the stove forever. Go—go out into the world among other cats. Perhaps you will find some young tomcats like yourself in spirit who will delight you with gravity and jest."

Ah! My master surmised indeed that a new life stood before me! Finally, after I had waited till midnight, friend Muzius arrived and led me across various roofs until finally on a nearly flat Italian roof ten imposing young cats, dressed just as carelessly and strangely as Muzius, welcomed us with loud cries of rejoicing. Muzius introduced me to his friends, praised my qualities, my loyal, honest mind, emphasized particularly how I had feasted him on fish, chicken bones, and sweet milk, and concluded by urging that I be accepted as a qualified cat *Bursch*. All voted favorably.

Certain ceremonies now followed which I will not describe,

8. A reference to the gymnastic movement established by Ludwig Jahn. See note 4 above.

as the gentle readers of my race might perhaps suspect that I had entered a forbidden society and could require me to give an account of it. I assure you, however, on my conscience, that there was no question of it being a society with specific conditions such as rules, secret signs, etc., but that the club was merely based on a similarity of views, for it was soon discovered that every one of us preferred sweet milk to water and meat to bread.

After the ceremonies were over, I received a fraternal kiss and pawshake from everyone, and they addressed me with the familiar *thou!* Then we sat down to a simple but joyous meal followed by a drinking bout. Muzius had prepared an excellent cat punch. If a gay young cat should wish to know the recipe of this delicious drink, I am unfortunately unable to give him any information. So much is certain, that its particularly pleasant taste as well as its potency was created by a sizable addition of herring brine.

With a voice which thundered far over the rooftops, the senior member Puff intoned the beautiful student song *"Gaudeamus igitur"!* With rapture I felt myself through and through to be a *juvenis* and did not like to think of the *tumulus*[9] at all, which a dark fate rarely grants our race in the quiet, peaceful earth. Various beautiful songs were now sung, for example, "Do let the politicians speak," etc., until Senior Puff banged his heavy paw on the table and announced that a real, genuine initiation song, namely, *"Ecce quam bonum,"*[10] must be sung, and immediately intoned the chorus, *"Ecce,* etc., etc."

I had never heard this song, the composition of which could be called just as deeply inspired, as harmonically and melodically correct as it was marvelous and inspiring. The composer is not known, as far as I am aware, but many ascribe this song to the great Handel; others, however, claim that it existed long before Handel's time, that according to the chronicle of Wittenberg it was sung at the time Hamlet was a *Fuchs.*[11] Anyhow, whoever wrote it, the work is great and immortal; especially to be admired is the way the soloists have the freedom to weave their parts into the

9. According to Ellinger, this version of the student song *Gaudeamus igitur* must be the oldest one known (before 1750), since the contemporary version is *"nos habebit humus,"* instead of *"tumulus."*

10. An old student song. See *Kommersbuch* [Student songbook] (Berlin, 1817), p. 117. The solo is improvised and is followed by the Latin refrain.

11. Literally "fox." Nickname for a student in his first semester.

chorus and create endless charming variations. Some of these variations, which I heard that night, have remained accurately in my mind.

When the chorus was ended, a black and white spotted fellow sang:

Much too sharply yawns the spitz,
Much too rude the poodle.
On his rump is where he sits,
The other on his noodle.

Chor. Ecce quam, etc., etc.

Then a grey cat sang:

Lift your cap from off your head,
A philistine is coming!
See the fool, he does not dread,
But skips along while humming."

Chor. Ecce quam, etc., etc.

Then a yellow cat:

The giddy fish must learn to swim,
The little bird comes flying.
Feathers grow all neat and trim,
But you will never buy 'em."

Chor. Ecce quam, etc., etc.

Next a white cat:

Mew and purr and purr and mew,
Do not try to snatch 'em.
Be polite and then they'll trust you;
Watch your claws, don't scratch 'em.

Chor. Ecce quam, etc., etc.

Next friend Muzius:

Master Monkey wants to see us
All cut to his measure.
Curl your lip, make a fuss,
He can't have his pleasure.

Chor. Ecce quam, etc., etc.

I was sitting next to Mužius, and so it was now my turn to invent a solo. All the solos that had been sung deviated so completely from the kind of verses I had written that I was quite concerned and worried about not hitting the tone and manner. Therefore, when the chorus ended, I remained silent. Several were already raising their glasses and crying *"pro poena"*[12] when I pulled myself together firmly and quickly sang:

Paw on paw and heart to heart,
Joy is what our life means.
As a *Bursch* we play our part,
Scorn the cat philistines.

Chor. Ecce quam, etc., etc.

My variation found the loudest, most unprecedented applause. The true-hearted youths stormed around me rejoicing, put their paws around me, pressed me to their thumping breasts. Here, too, my great innate genius was recognized. It was one of the most beautiful moments of my life. And now a fiery *vivat* was raised to many a great and famous cat, especially to those who, in spite of their greatness and fame, had kept aloof from all philistinism in word and deed; and then we separated.

But the punch had gone to my head, the roofs seemed to spin; I was scarcely able to remain upright with the help of my tail, which I used as a balancing stick.

Feeling muddled as I never had before, I was not able to—

(s.p.) "—knew just as well as the shrewd Frau Benzon, but that I would get news from you now, you faithful soul, that my heart had not suspected." Thus spoke Meister Abraham; and without opening the letter he had received, having happily recognized the handwriting as Kreisler's, he locked it in the drawer of his writing table and went out into the park. Meister Abraham had for years had the custom of leaving letters unopened for hours and even days. "If the content is unimportant," he said, "then the delay does not matter; if the letter contains bad news, then I gain a few happy or at least untroubled hours; if there is good news in it, a mature man can wait to be overwhelmed with joy." The Meister's habit should be condemned, first of all because a person who

12. A call for a forfeit.

leaves letters around is quite useless either as a merchant or as a writer for political or literary newspapers; it is also evident that people who are neither merchants nor newspaper writers can cause trouble this way. As concerns this biographer, he does not believe at all in Abraham's stoical indifference, but attributes that habit rather to a certain timid fear of unfolding the secret in a sealed letter. Receiving letters is a quite special pleasure, and therefore we are particularly fond of those persons who bring us this pleasure, namely, the postmen, as some witty writer has remarked somewhere. This may be called a pleasant self-mystification. Your biographer remembers that once at the university when he had waited in vain for a letter from a beloved person, he begged the postman with tears in his eyes to bring him a letter soon from his home town, that he would get a sizable tip for it. With a crafty expression, the fellow promised to do this and, a few days later, when the letter actually arrived, brought it in triumph, as if he had kept his word, and accepted the promised tip. But your biographer, who perhaps is giving too much space to self-mystification, does not know whether you, gentle reader, have a like cast of mind and feel a mixture of pleasure and fear which makes your heart beat when you are about to open your letter, even when it is scarcely likely that the letter could contain anything crucial. It may be that the same feeling that constricts the heart, the feeling with which we view the dark future, is stirring here; and because a light pressure of the finger is sufficient to reveal what is hidden, the moment which disturbs us is a crucial one. And—! How many beautiful hopes have been broken along with that fatal seal; and the charming fantasies created in our minds, which seemed to be our most fervent desires, dissolved into nothing; and that little sheet of paper was the magic curse which made arid the flower garden in which we thought to walk, and life stretched out before us like an inhospitable, dreary wasteland! If it seems good to collect one's soul before the gentle pressure of the finger reveals what is hidden, perhaps this excuses Meister Abraham's habit, which is otherwise reprehensible but which also happens to be a habit of this biographer since a certain fatal time during which nearly every letter he received resembled Pandora's box from which, once opened, a thousand evils and calamities flew out. However, even though Meister Abraham has shut up the Kapellmeister's letter in his writing table or in the little drawer in the

writing table, and even if he has gone for a walk in the park, nevertheless, the gentle reader will learn its contents immediately. Johannes Kreisler had written as follows:

My beloved Meister,

I might have been able to shout *"la fin couronne les oeuvres!"* like Lord Clifford in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*[13] when the very noble Duke of York wounded him mortally. For, by the heavens, my hat fell backward into the bushes, severely wounded, and I after it, like a person about whom it is said in a battle, "He falls or he has fallen." Those people rarely get up again; but your Johannes, my dear Meister, did that immediately. I could not bother about my severely wounded comrade who had fallen, not by my side,[14] but from my head, since I had enough to do to avoid the barrel of the pistol by a great leap sideways (I am using the word *leap* neither in the philosophical nor the musical but only in the gymnastic meaning[15]) as someone was aiming at me from only three feet away. But I did more than that; I suddenly switched from the defensive to the offensive, leapt at the shooter, and without further ado plunged my dagger into his body. You have always reproached me, Meister, for not having a command of historical style and of being incapable of telling anything without useless phrases and digressions. What do you say to the concise account of my Italian adventure in the park at Sieghartshof, which a high-minded Fürst rules so benignly that he tolerates bandits just for entertainment?

Consider, dear Meister, that what I have said before is only the sketchy table of contents for the historical chapter that I wish to write you instead of an ordinary letter if my impatience and the prior permit it. There is little to tell about the adventure in the forest. I felt sure at once, when the shot was fired, that I would profit from it; for as I fell, I felt a burning pain on the left side of my head, which the assistant headmaster at Göniönesmühl had quite rightly called stubborn. My excellent skull had offered a stubborn resistance to the filthy lead, so that the surface wound was of no importance. But tell me, dear Meister, tell me on the spot

13. *Henry VI, Part Two,* V, ii, 28.

14. A parody of Uhland's well-known patriotic poem "Der Gute Kamerad" (1809).

15. *Satz* means "leap." Philosophically it means "thesis," and musically it means "movement."

or this evening or at the latest early in the morning, whose body my dagger pierced. I would be very pleased to hear that I had shed no common blood, but merely some princely ichor;[16] and I suspect that that is so. Meister! Then chance would have led me to do that deed which the dark spirit prophesied to me in the fisherman's hut! Was this dagger, in the moment when I used it in self-defense against a murderer, the fearful sword of nemesis avenging a bloodguilt? Write me everything, Meister, and especially what the weapon you put in my hand has to do with the little likeness. But no, no, do not tell me anything about it. Let me keep this Medusian picture, the sight of which petrified the criminal, although the explanation was hidden from me. It seems to me that this talisman would lose its power as soon as I knew what kind of a constellation changed it to a magic weapon! Would you believe, Meister, that I have not even looked at your little picture properly? When it is the right time, you will tell me everything that I have to know, and then I will return the talisman to your hands. Therefore, for now, not another word about it! But I will continue with my historical chapter.

After I had run through that aforesaid somebody, that said pistol wielder, with my dagger so that he collapsed without a sound, I leapt away with the speed of an Ajax as I thought I heard voices in the park and believed myself in danger. I intended to run to Sieghartsweiler, but the darknes of the night caused me to lose my way. I ran on faster and faster, always hoping to find my way. I waded through ditches, I scrambled up a steep hill and finally collapsed in a bush from exhaustion. Then it seemed to me that a light was flashing right in front of my eyes; a felt a stabbing pain in my head, and I awoke from a profound sleep. My wound had bled profusely, and I made myself a bandage with my handkerchief that would have done honor to the most skillful company doctor on the field of battle, and looked around, quite cheerful and happy now. Not far from me loomed the mighty ruins of a castle. You notice, Meister, that to my no little surprise, I was on the Geierstein.

My wound no longer pained me; I felt fresh and light-headed; I stepped out of the bush that had served me as a bedroom. The sun rose and cast glittering rays of light on field and forest like happy morning greetings. The birds awoke in the thickets and

16. An ethereal fluid which was supposed to flow in the veins of the Greek gods.

bathed themselves, twittering, in the morning dew and flew up into the sky. Sieghartshof lay below, still wrapped in a nocturnal fog; but the veil soon vanished, and trees and shrubs stood in flaming gold. The park's lake resembled a blindingly shining mirror; I could distinguish the little fisherman's hut like a small white dot. I even thought I could see the bridge clearly. Yesterday came back to me, but as if it were a time long past from which I retained nothing but sorrow at a recollection of something lost forever, which both lacerated my heart and filled it with sweet rapture. "Fool, what are you trying to say? What have you lost forever in the yesterday long past?" Thus you call to me, Meister; I hear you. Ah, Meister, once again I stand on the looming peak of the Geierstein. Once again I stretch out my arms like the wings of eagles so that I might soar up to where a sweet magic reigned, where that love which is not conditioned by space and time, which is eternal like the world spirit expanded in me in portentous heavenly tones that are yearning itself and desire! I know that right before my nose there is sitting some hungry devil of an objector who is arguing for the sake of earthly bread and who asks me mockingly whether it is possible for a sound to have blue eyes. I offer a most convincing proof that sound is actually also a look which shines forth from a world of light through torn veils of clouds; the objector continues, however, and asks about forehead, about hair, about mouth and lips, about arms, hands, feet, and doubts the whole time with a spiteful smile that one mere, pure sound could be endowed with all this. Oh Lord, I know what the scamp means; namely, nothing more than, as long as I am *glebae adscriptus*[17] as he and the others, as long as we all eat more than the rays of the sun and sometimes have to sit on a different kind of seat than the study chair, that the eternal longing, about which any fool can jabber— Meister! I would not want you to join the side of the hungry objector; I would not find that nice. And tell me, could a single, reasonable cause drive you to that? Have I ever shown an inclination toward juvenile foolishness? Now that I have attained more mature years, have I not always known how to act soberly? Have I ever wished to be a glove, merely to be able to kiss Julia's cheek, like cousin Romeo?[18] Believe me, Meister, people may say what they will, I have nothing in my head but musical notes, and

17. "Bondsman." Loosely, "a member of the earth."
18. *Romeo and Juliet,* II, ii, 24–25.

in my heart and soul their sounds; for, deuce take it, how would I otherwise be able to compose such nice, organized church pieces as the evensong which lies finished on my desk. But—the story has nearly been forgotten—I will relate more.

In the distance I heard the sound of a powerful male voice singing, a voice which was approaching nearer and nearer. Soon I saw a Benedictine priest who was chanting a Latin hymn as he wandered along the path. Not far from me he stood still, stopped singing, and looked around the countryside while he took off his broad traveling hat and dried the sweat from his forehead with a cloth; then he vanished into the bushes. I felt a desire to join him. The man was more than well-nourished. The sun burned more and more strongly, and so I could well imagine that he would have sought out a resting place in the shade. I was not mistaken, for when I entered the thicket, I saw that the worthy gentleman had settled himself on a stone thickly covered with moss. A higher rock next to him served as a table; he had spread out a white cloth on it and had taken out of his pack bread and a roast chicken that he was beginning to eat with a good appetite. "*Sed praeter omnia bibendum quid,*"[19] he said to himself and poured wine out of a bottle into a little silver cup which he had taken out of his pocket. He was about to drink when I stepped up to him with a "Praised be Jesus Christ!" With his cup at his lips, he looked up; and I recognized in that minute my dear old friend from the Benedictine Abbey at Kanzheim, the honest Pater Hilarius, prefect of the choir. "In all eternity!" stammered Pater Hilarius while he stared at me with wide-opened eyes. I suddenly remembered my odd headgear, which probably gave me a strange appearance, and began, "Oh my dearly beloved, worthy friend Hilarius, do not mistake me for an escaped, wandering Hindu, nor for a compatriate who has fallen on his head, for I am none other and do not wish to be any other than your friend, Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler!"

"By the holy St. Benedict," cried Pater Hilarius joyfully, "I recognized you immediately, you marvelous composer and good friend; but *per diem,*[20] tell me where you have come from, what has happened to you, who I believed to be *in floribus*[21] at the court of the Grand Duke?"

19. "But first of all, something to drink."
20. "By day." Perhaps a euphemism for *per deum,* "by God."
21. "Flourishing."

I did not hesitate to tell the Pater briefly everything that had happened to me and how I had been obliged to thrust my dagger into the body of the person who wanted to take pot shots at me as if I were a target, and that the said target shooter had probably been an Italian prince called Hektor, as many a worthy deer-hunting dog is called. "What should I do now, return to Sieghartsweiler or— Counsel me, Pater Hilarius!"

Thus I concluded my tale. Pater Hilarius, who had been murmuring many a "Hm! So! Hey! Holy St. Benedict!" now looked down, murmuring *"Bibamus!"*[22] and emptied the silver cup at one draught.

Then he laughed: "Truly, Kapellmeister, the best advice that I can give you is that you should sit down here and lunch with me. I can recommend these birds; our worthy Brother Macarius shot them just yesterday. As you well remember, he always hits everything, not only the notes in the responses; and if the vinegar is tasty with which they were marinated, that is due to the care of Brother Eusebius, who lovingly roasted them himself. As to the wine, it is worthy to wet the tongue of a fugitive Kapellmeister. Genuine Bocksbeutel, *carrissime* Johannes, genuine Bocksbeutel from the St. Johannis-Hospital at Würzburg, the best quality of which comes to us, unworthy servants of the Lord. *Ergo bibamus"*[23]

With that he filled the cup and handed it to me. I needed no urging; I drank and ate like one who really needs such sustenance.

Pater Hilarius had chosen the most delightful place to have his breakfast. A thick clump of birches shaded the flowery grass, and the crystal-clear forest brook which splashed over the rocks added to the refreshing coolness. The hermit-like privacy of the place filled me with good cheer and peace; and while Pater Hilarius told me about everything that had been happening recently at the Abbey, not forgetting to intersperse his usual jokes and his delightful school Latin, I listened to the voices of the forest and of the brook that spoke to me in comforting melodies.

Pater Hilarius may have ascribed my silence to my bitter cares occasioned by recent events.

"Be," he began, handing me the cup which he had refilled, "be of good courage, Kapellmeister! You have shed blood, that is true, and shedding blood is a sin; but *distinguendum est inter et*

22. "Let us drink."
23. "Therefore, let us drink."

inter.[24] Each loves his own life best; he only possesses it once. You have defended yours, and the Church does not forbid that at all, as may be sufficiently proved; and neither our most worthy Abbot nor any other servant of the Lord will deny you absolution, even if you did unintentionally stab royal intestines. *Ergo bibamus! Vir sapiens non te abhorrebit, Domine!*[25] But, dearest Kreisler, if you return to Sieghartsweiler, you will be nastily interrogated about the *cur, quomodo, quando, ubi;*[26] and if you accuse the Prince of a murderous attack, who will believe you? *Ibi jacet lepus in pipere!*[27] But look, Kapellmeister, how—but *bibendum quid—*"[28] He emptied the cup and then continued, "Yes, look, Kapellmeister. Good advice comes with Bochsbeutel! You must know that I was on my way to All Saints Monastery to get some music from the choir master there for the next festivals. I have searched through our box two or three times; everything is old and worn, and as to the music that you composed for us during your stay in the Abbey, that is fine and new, but—do not hold this against me, Kapellmeister—written in such a curious way that one cannot take his eye off the score. If one wants to squint a little through the grating at this or that pretty girl in the nave, one makes an error at once in a rest or something else or hits a false beat and spoils the whole thing—bang, there it is, and dum-ti-dum-dum, Brother Jacob hits the keys! *Ad patibulum cum illis*[29]—I might—but, *bibamus!*"

After we had both drunk, the stream of conversation flowed on: "*Desunt,*[30] who are not there, and who are not there cannot be interrogated. So I would think you should come back with me to the Abbey, which by the shortcut is scarcely two hours from here. In the Abbey you are safe from all pursuit, *contra hostium insidias;*[31] I will bring you as living music and you will stay there as long as you like or as long as you find it advisable. The very worthy Abbot

24. "One should distinguish between and between." Many of the following Latin phrases are borrowed from Rabelais' *Gargantua*, according to Ellinger.

25. "A wise man will not recoil from you, sir."

26. "The why, how, when, where."

27. "There lies the hare in the pepper." That is, "There lies the difficulty."

28. "Something to drink."

29. "To the yoke with them." The *patibulum* is a fork-shaped yoke, an instrument of punishment fastened on the neck of slaves and criminals.

30. "They are absent."

31. "From the plots of your enemies."

will provide all your needs. You will wear the finest underwear and put on a Benedictine robe over it, which will be very becoming to you. But put on my hat so that you will not look like the wounded man in the picture of the Good Samaritan while we are journeying there. I will pull my hood up over my bald spot. *Bibendum quid,* my friend!"

He emptied the cup once more, rinsed it out in the nearby brook, packed everything quickly into his bag, put his hat on my forehead, and called out joyfuly, "Kapellmeister, we have only to put one foot in front of the other at a comfortable pace and we will arrive just when they are ringing *ad conventum conventuales,*[32] i.e., when the most worthy Abbot seats himself at table."

You can well imagine, dear Meister, that I had nothing at all to object to in the proposal of the happy Pater Hilarius, that it was extremely welcome to me to go to a place that in so many respects could be a beneficial asylum. We walked leisurely, conversing of this and that and, as Pater Hilarius had wished, arrived at the Abbey just as the dinner bell was ringing.

To forestall all questions for the moment, Pater Hilarius told the Abbot that since he had by chance heard that I was staying in Sieghartsweiler, he preferred to fetch the composer, who carried in his head an inexhaustible supply of music, instead of the music from All Saints Monastery.

The Abbot Chrysostomus (I think I must have already told you a lot about him) received me with that friendly delight which only belongs to those with truly good natures and praised the decision of Pater Hilarius.

Imagine me now, Meister Abraham, transformed into a tolerable Benedictine monk, sitting in a large, high-ceilinged room of the main building of the Abbey, and busily writing evensongs and hymns and between whiles jotting down thoughts for a solemn high mass; and imagine the singing and performing brothers and the choir boys gathering, and me busily holding rehearsals and directing behind the grating of the choir. Really, I feel so buried in this solitude that I could compare myself with Tartini[33] who, fearing the revenge of Cardinal Cornaro, fled to the Minorite's

32. "The monastery brothers to the monastery."

33. Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770), an Italian composer and violin virtuoso. Because of a secret marriage to Cardinal Cornaro's daughter, he had to flee to the Minorites' monastery in Assissi.

Monastery at Assissi, where finally, after years, a Paduan discovered him when he was in the church and saw his lost friend in the choir when a blast of wind blew aside the curtain which concealed the orchestra. This could have happened to you, Meister, as it did to that Paduan; but I had to tell you where I was, otherwise you could not imagine what had happened to me. Did someone find my hat and wonder that its head was gone? Meister! A special, beneficial calm has come over me; do you suppose I have anchored in my harbor? Recently, when I was wandering along the little lake that lies in the middle of the Abbey's extensive gardens and I saw my reflection in the lake wandering beside me, I said, "The person who is going next to me down there is a calm, thoughtful man who, no longer buzzing wildly around in vague, endless spaces, holds firmly to the established path; and it is a lucky thing for me that the person is none other than I myself." From another lake an annoying double once looked at me—but quiet—quiet about everything. Meister, name me no names—tell me nothing—not even whom I speared. But write me a lot about yourself. The brothers are coming to a rehearsal; I am ending my historical chapter and at the same time my letter. Farewell, my good Meister, and remember me! etc., etc., etc. etc.

In the park's distant, overgrown paths, wandering alone, Meister Abraham considered the fate of his dear friend Kreisler and how he had lost the Kapellmeister again after scarcely having won him. He saw the boy Johannes, himself, in Göniönesmühl at his old uncle's piano; the boy was hammering out Sebastian Bach's most difficult sonatas with a look of pride, with almost manly fists; and to reward the boy he stuck a bag of candy secretly in his pocket. It seemed to him to have happened only a few days ago, and he was surprised that the boy was none other than the Kreisler who seemed to be tangled in a strange, whimsical game of mysterious circumstances. With the contemplation of those past days and of the ominous present, the picture of his own life rose up before him.

His father, a strict, stubborn man, had kept him to the art of organ building almost by force, an occupation the former pursued as if it were an ordinary rough handicraft. He did not allow anyone but himself, as organ builder, to touch the works, and so the apprentices had to become skillful carpenters, tinfounders, etc., before they got to the inner mechanism. Precision, durability, a

good mechanism was all that counted with the old man; he had no feeling for the soul, for the tone; and strangely enough this was manifest in the organs he built, which were thought to have a hard, sharp sound. In addition, the old man was quite devoted to the childish ornaments of a past era. He had added to one organ the kings David and Solomon, who turned their heads as if in admiration during the playing; none of his organs were without drumming, tooting, beating angels, or roosters crowing and beating their wings, etc. Abraham could often avoid deserved or undeserved blows and entice from the old man an expression of paternal joy by using his inventive gift to produce some new trick, perhaps a harsh-sounding cock-a-doodle-do for the organ rooster. Abraham had fervently longed for the time when he could travel as a journeyman according to custom. The time finally came; and Abraham left his father's house, never to return.

On these travels which he undertook in the company of other journeymen, mostly wild, rough fellows, he stopped once at the Abbey of Saint Blasius, which was situated in the Black Forest, and heard the famous organ of Johannes Andreas Silbermann.[34] For the first time, the wonderful, full sounds of this organ revealed the magic of harmony to him; he felt himself transported to another world, and from that moment on he was in love with an art which he had previously pursued with dislike. His whole life now seemed to him to have been so worthless in his past surroundings that he exerted all his strength to pull himself out of the morass into which he believed himself to have sunk. His common sense and his intelligence enabled him to progress with giant steps and yet—he often felt the heavy weight which his earlier training and a vulgar life had hung on him. Chiara, his union with this strange, mysterious being, was the second shining moment in his life; and these two experiences, the awakening to harmony and Chiara's love, created a dualism in his poetic existence that affected his rough but strong nature beneficially. He had scarcely escaped from inns and pubs, where dirty songs resounded in thick clouds of tobacco, when chance, or rather his skill in mechanical devices which he surrounded with mystery (as the gentle reader has already discovered), brought the young Abraham to surroundings that must have been a new world for him and in which he, always remaining a stranger, managed to maintain himself by as-

34. An organ builder (1712–83).

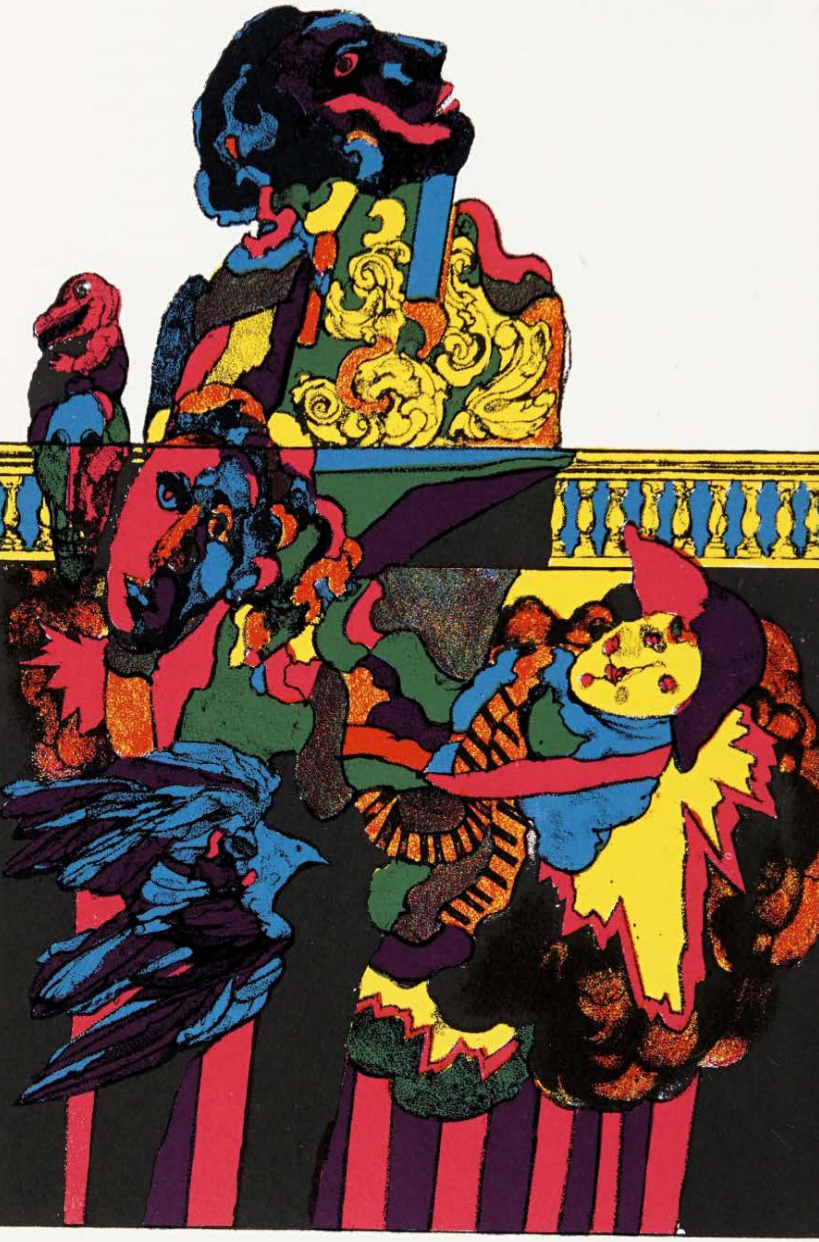
serting the firm tone given him by nature. With time this firm tone became firmer and firmer, and since it was not at all that of a simple boor but was based on a clear, healthy human understanding, on correct opinions of life often uttered with pointed mockery, it was inevitable that while the boy could only survive and be tolerated, the man inspired the greatest respect as a feared leader. There is nothing easier than to impress certain eminent people, who are always less than one considers them. Meister Abraham was thinking of that now as he was returning from his walk to the little fisherman's hut; he burst out in a hearty laugh, relieving his sense of oppression.

The vivid recollection of the moment in the church of the Abbey of Saint Blasius and of his lost Chiara had plunged Meister Abraham into a melancholy mood that was not usual for him. "Why," he asked himself, "why does this wound which I had thought was scarred over long ago bleed now so frequently? Why do I now hang on empty dreams, since it seems to me that I may have to interfere in the machinations of an evil spirit!" The Meister was oppressed by the thought that he felt endangered in his peculiar activities—though by what he did not know—until, as stated, the course of his thoughts brought him to the respectable people, at whom he laughed; and immediately he felt a noticeable relief.

He entered the fisherman's hut to read Kreisler's letter.

Something remarkable had taken place in the royal palace. The doctor said, "Wonderful! This is outside of all my practice, all my experience!" The Fürstin, "It had to happen thus, and the Princess is not compromised." The Fürst, "Did I not expressly forbid it, but that idiot valet has no ears. Now—the chief forester is to see to it that the Prince does not get hold of any more powder." Rätin Benzon, "Thank Heaven, she is saved!" Meanwhile Princess Hedwiga was looking out of her bedroom window while she occasionally struck chords on the same guitar which Kreisler had thrown away in irritation and had taken back from Julia's hands, hallowed, as he thought. Prince Ignatius was sitting on the sofa, weeping and wailing, "It hurts, it hurts!" Julia was in front of him, busily peeling potatoes into a little silver dish.

All this was related to an event that the doctor quite rightly called remarkable and outside all his practice. Prince Ignatius still had, as the gentle reader has already learned several times, the



innocent, playful mind, the happy ingenuousness of a six-year-old boy, and therefore he liked to play like one. Among his toys he had a small metal cannon that he used in his favorite game, which, however, he could not play very often since he needed all sorts of things that were not readily available; namely, some grains of powder, some good shot, and a small bird. When he had all those things, he would march his troops forward, court-martial the bird —who had instigated a rebellion in his royal father's lost land— load the cannon, and shoot the bird—which he would tie to a candlestick with a black heart on its breast—sometimes killing it, but sometimes not; and then, in order to carry out the just punishment of the traitor, he would have to help it along with his penknife.

Fritz, the gardener's ten-year-old boy, had gotten the Prince a pretty, bright linnet and as usual received a crown for it. The Prince had then slipped into the hunt room when the huntsmen were away, had found some powder and shot, and from them had prepared the necessary ammunition. He was about to begin the execution, which required speed, as the bright, twittering rebel was doing its best to escape, when it occurred to him that Princess Hedwiga, who had lately become so nice, should not be denied the pleasure of being present at the execution of the little traitor. Therefore, he took the box in which he kept his army under one arm, the cannon under the other, and the bird in his hand, and tiptoed very, very quietly, since the Fürst had forbidden him to see the Princess, into her bedroom, where he found her lying dressed on her bed still in a cataleptic state. It was a bad thing and, as will be seen, at the same time a good thing that the chambermaid had just left the Princess.

The Prince tied the bird to a candlestick, set up his army in ranks, and loaded the cannon. Then he lifted the Princess up from her bed, brought her to the table, and explained that she was now the commanding general and *he,* for his part, would be the ruling Fürst and would fire the artillery which would kill the rebel. The large quantity of ammunition had tempted the Prince, and he had not only overloaded the cannon but had scattered powder all around on the table. As soon as he unlimbered the gun, it not only made an unusual bang, but the scattered powder flew up and burned his hand so severely that he screamed loudly and did not even notice that at the moment of the explosion the Princess

crashed to the floor. The shot echoed through the corridors; everyone rushed to the room fearing disaster, and even the Fürst and Fürstin pushed through the door with the servants, forgetting all etiquette in their sudden fright. The ladies-in-waiting lifted the Princess off the floor and placed her on the sofa, while the doctor and the surgeon were summoned. The Fürst quickly saw from the arrangements on the table what had happened and with eyes that blazed fire spoke to the Prince, who was screaming horribly. "Look, Ignatius! That is the result of your stupid, childish tricks! Put some salve on and stop screaming like a street-boy! With a birch rod he should be—" His trembling lips prevented any clarity in his speech; the Fürst became incoherent and left the room gravely. The servants were horrified at the Fürst's words, for he had addressed the boy with contempt,[35] had called him Ignatius, speaking with implacable anger.

When the doctor announced that the crisis had arrived and that he hoped that the Princess's ominous condition would soon pass and that she would be completely recovered, the Fürstin said, with less concern than one would expect, *"Dieu soit loué;* send me further news." But she embraced the weeping Prince tenderly, comforted him with sweet words, and then followed the Fürst.

Meanwhile Benzon had arrived at the palace with Julia, intending to see unhappy Hedwiga. As soon as she heard what had happened, she hastened to the Princess's room, flew to the sofa, knelt down, seized Hedwiga's hand, and looked her straight in the eyes, while Julia shed hot tears, imagining that her best friend was sinking into a mortal slumber. Then Hedwiga took a deep breath and said in a somber, scarcely audible voice, "Is it dead?"

Prince Ignatius immediately stopped crying in spite of his pain and replied with great joy, laughing and giggling at the successful execution, "Yes, yes, Princess sister, quite dead; shot right through the heart."

"Yes," continued the Princess, lowering her eyes again, "yes, I know. I saw the drop of blood which flowed from its heart, but it fell in my breast and I turned to crystal and it only lives in my dead body."

"Hedwiga," began the Rätin softly and tenderly. "Hedwiga, wake from your unhappy, evil dream. Hedwiga, do you know me?"

35. The Fürst addressed his son with the pronoun *Er,* at that time used for addressing a person of inferior rank.

The Princess waved her hand gently, as if she wished to be left alone. "Hedwiga," continued the Rätin, "Julia is here."

A smile glowed on Hedwiga's cheek. Julia bent over her, pressed a gentle kiss on her friend's pale lips. Then Hedwiga whispered scarcely audibly, "Everything is over now; in a few minutes I will be strong again; I feel—"

Nobody had bothered about the little traitor that was lying on the table with a torn breast. Julia now caught sight of it, only then realizing that Prince Ignatius had again been playing that revolting game that she hated so much. "Prince," she said, her face flushing scarlet, "Prince, what had the poor bird done to you that you killed it without mercy? That is truly a stupid, cruel game. You promised me a long time ago not to play it, and you have not kept your word. But! If you do it once more, I will never arrange your cups again or teach your dolls to talk or tell you the story of the Water King!"

"Don't be cross," whimpered the Prince, "don't be cross, Fräulein Julia! The bird was a really bad fellow. He had secretly cut off all the soldiers' coattails, and besides that he had instigated a rebellion. But it hurts—it hurts!"

Benzon looked at the Prince, then at Julia, with a strange smile; then she said, "What a lot of fuss about a couple of burned fingers! But it is true; the doctor is taking forever getting the ointment. However, a common household remedy also helps uncommon people. Get some raw potatoes." She went toward the door but stopped as if suddenly taken with an idea, turned around, embraced Julia, kissed her on the forehead, and said, "You are my dear, good child and will always be *exactly* what you should be! Look out for eccentric, crazy fools and guard your soul from the evil magic of their seductive conversation." She cast another searching glance at the Princess, who seemed to be slumbering softly, and quietly left the room.

The doctor came in carrying an enormous poultice, assuring everyone with deep regret that he had been waiting for some time in the chambers of His Highness, the Prince, since he could not suppose that he was to come to the Princess's bedchamber. He was about to go up to the Prince with the poultice, but the lady-in-waiting, who was bringing in a couple of fine potatoes on a silver dish, blocked his way and assured him peeled potatoes were the very best remedy for burns. "And I," Julia interrupted the lady-in-

waiting, taking the silver dish, "and I myself will fix a nice poultice for you, my Prince."

"Your Grace," the doctor said in alarm. "Consider! A household remedy for the burned fingers of a high, sovereign lord! Only skill—only skill ought to—must be used here!" He was about to approach the Prince again, but the latter recoiled, crying, "Go away, go away! Fräulein Julia will fix the poultice for me; skill can get out of the room."

Skill excused himself along with his well-prepared poultice, casting poisonous looks at the lady-in-waiting.

Julia heard the Princess breathing more and more vigorously, but how surprised she was when—

(M.c.)—fall asleep. I tossed back and forth on my bed; I tried every possible position. I stretched myself out, I curled up in a ball, I laid my head on my soft paws and curled my tail elegantly around me so that it covered my eyes, I rolled over on my side, I stretched my legs out straight and let my tail hang down lifelessly from my cot. Everything—everything was in vain! My ideas, my thoughts became more and more confused until I finally fell into a delirium that was not sleep but might be called a battle between sleeping and waking, as is rightly claimed by Moritz, Davidson, Nudow, Tiedemann, Wienholt, Reil, Schubert, Kluge[36] and other physiological writers who have written about sleep and dreams and whom I have not read.

The bright sun was shining into my master's room when I actually awoke from this delirium, from this battle between sleeping and waking, to a clear consciousness. But what a consciousness,

36. Karl Philipp Moritz (1756–93), editor of the *Magazin für Erfahrungsseelenkunde* in which many articles about dreams appeared; Wolf Davidson was a doctor in Berlin from 1772 to 1800. He was the author of *Versuch über den Schlaf* (1786), a book about sleep; Heinrich Nudow (b. 1752) was a doctor and author of *Versuch einer Theorie des Schlafs* (1791), also about a theory of sleep; Dietrich Tiedemann (1748–1803) wrote about sleep in *Untersuchungen über den Menschen* (1778); Arnold Wienhold wrote *Heilkraft des tierischen Magnetismus nach eignen Beobachtungen* (of especial pertinence is the section on the nature of sleep and its healing power, especially sleep produced by magnetism); Johann Christian Reil (1759–1813), a doctor, wrote about dreams in *Rhapsodien über die Anwemding der psychischen Kurmethode auf Geisteszerrüttungen* (1803); Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert (1780–1860) wrote about the symbolism of dreams in *Symbolik des Traumes* (1804); Carl Alexander Ferdinand Kluge (1782–1844), a doctor, wrote about sleep in *Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus* (1811).

what an awakening! Oh you young cats who read this, prick up your ears and read carefully, so that the moral does not escape you! Take to heart what I say about this condition—I repeat, to heart—and look out when you drink cat punch for the first time at a cat *Burschen* party. Sip it in moderation, and refer to me and my experience if you are not allowed to; let Kater Murr be your true authority which, I hope, will be acknowledged and accepted.

Well then! To begin with, in regard to my physical condition, I felt not only exhausted and miserable, but what caused me special agony was a certain strong, abnormal demand made by my stomach which, because of its abnormality, could not be satisfied and only produced a useless rumbling in my insides in which even my sensitive nerves were involved, constantly quivering and trembling between physical desire and incapacity. It was a wretched condition!

But the psychical disturbance was almost worse. Along with bitter repentance and remorse for the yesterday, which I actually could not consider blameworthy, there came into my soul a hopeless indifference toward all earthly well being. I despised all worldly goods, all gifts of nature, wisdom, intelligence, wit, etc. The greatest philosophers, the cleverest poets were of no greater value to me than rag dolls, so-called clowns; and what was the worse, I despised myself and I felt I was nothing but a quite ordinary, miserable mouser! There is nothing more depressing! The thought that I was trapped in misery, that the whole mundane earth was a vale of sorrow, annihilated me completely. I shut my eyes tight and wept inordinately!

"You have been out on the town and now you feel terrible? That's the way things go! Sleep it off, old boy, then you will feel better!" cried my master to me when I did not touch my breakfast and uttered several moans. My master! Oh Lord, he did not know, could not know my suffering! He had no idea how *Burschentum* and cat punch affect a sensitive soul!

It might have been noon; I still had not stirred from my bed when suddenly, heaven knows how he managed to slink in, Brother Muzius stood before me. I complained to him about my miserable state; instead, however, of being sorry and comforting me as I had hoped, he burst out laughing and cried, "Ho ho, Brother Murr, it is nothing more than the crisis, the transition from unworthy, philistine boyhood to worthy *Burschentum* which makes you be-

lieve that you are sick and miserable. You are not yet accustomed to noble drinking! But do me a favor and shut your mouth and do not tell your master about your sufferings. Our race has a bad enough reputation as it is because of this illusory illness, and slanderous people have given it a name[37] which refers to us and which I do not like to repeat. But get up, pull yourself together, come with me; the fresh air will do you good, and then you must take 'the hair of the dog that bit you.' You will soon find out what that means."

Since the time that he had saved me from philistinism, Brother Muzius exercised an unlimited control over me; I had to do what he wished, so I got up with effort from my bed, stretched my exhausted limbs as well as I could, and followed my true brother to the roof. We walked up and down several times, and I actually began to feel somewhat better and fresher. Then Brother Muzius led me behind the chimney, and there, no matter how much I objected, I had to take two or three swallows of straight herring brine. This was the "hair of the dog," according to Muzius's expression, that I had to take. The drastic effect of this remedy was more wonderful than wonderful! What shall I say? My stomach's peculiar demands were silenced, the rumblings ceased, my nervous system became calm, life was beautiful again, I treasured earthly comfort, knowledge, wisdom, reason, wit, etc.; I was restored to myself, I was again the marvelous, very superior Kater Murr! O Nature, Nature! Can it be that a few drops which irresponsible tomcats enjoy with a bold and free recklessness are able to arouse rebellion against you and against the beneficent principle which you have implanted in his breast, according to which he should be convinced that the world with all its pleasures, such as fried fish, chicken bones, milk porridge, etc., is the best of all worlds and he the best thing of all, since their delights were created only for him and for his sake?[38] But—a philosophical cat recognizes that there is deep wisdom in this—that huge, miserable agony is only the counterpoise which produces the needed reaction for the propulsion of his being; and so it (the agony, namely) is established in the idea of the eternal universe. Drink a hair of the

37. *Kater* is also German slang for "hangover."

38. Humorous reference to the philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), who stated that God, the supreme monad, shapes this world as the best of all possible worlds.

dog, youthful cats, and comfort yourselves with this philosophical, empirical principle of your learned, intelligent peer.

Suffice it to say that from then on I spent a lot of time on the roofs, leading a gay and happy student life, in the company of Muzius and other good, honest, faithful lads, white, yellow, and mixed. I am now coming to an important event in my life which was not without consequences.

Early one evening, when I was about to go with Brother Muzius to a beer party which the students had arranged, in the shimmer of the moonlight I encountered that black, grey, yellow traitor who had stolen Miesmies from me. It is quite likely that I hesitated at the sight of the hated rival who had defeated me so disgracefully. He went right by without greeting me, and it seemed to me that he smiled at me mockingly, conscious of the superiority he had attained over me. I thought of my lost Miesmies, of the blows I had received; my blood boiled! Muzius noticed my anger, and when I informed him of what I believed I had observed, he said, "You are right, Brother Murr. That fellow made a nasty face and walked by very insolently. He probably wanted to insult you. Well, we will soon find out. If I am not mistaken, that gay philistine has begun a new love affair near here. He creeps around here on the roof every evening. Let us wait a bit; perhaps the Monsieur will return soon, and then we can see what happens."

Indeed it was not very long before the fellow came haughtily back and measured me from a distance with a disdainful glance. I walked up to him boldly and deliberately; we passed each other so closely that our tails touched violently. I stopped at once and said in a firm voice, "Meow!" He also stopped, turned around, and replied defiantly, "Meow!" Then each went his way.

"That was an insult!" cried Muzius quite angrily. "I will take that gay, defiant fellow to task tomorrow."

The next morning Muzius went to him and asked him in my name whether he had touched my tail. He sent me the reply that he had touched my tail. Then I: If he had touched my tail, I would have to consider it an insult. Then he: I could consider it what I wanted to. Then I: I considered it an insult. Then he: I was in no position to judge what was an insult. Then I: I knew very well and better than he. Then he: I was not enough of a man that he could insult me. Then I again: I, however, considered it an insult. Then he: I was a stupid boy. Then I, to make myself one up: If I

was a stupid boy, he was a no-good spitz! Then came the challenge.

(*Editor's marginal note.* Oh Murr, my tomcat! Either the point of honor has not changed since Shakespeare's time or I have caught you in a literary lie. That is, in a lie which is supposed to lend the event you are relating greater splendor and fire! Isn't the course which led to the duel with the gay pensioner a direct parody of Touchstone's lie seven times removed in *As You Like It*?[39] Do I not find in this alleged procedure that led to the duel the whole scale from the Retort Courteous, the Quip Modest, the Reply Churlish, the Reproof Valiant up to the Countercheck Quarrelsome; and can it to some extent exonerate you that you concluded with a couple of insults instead of the Lie Direct? Murr! My tomcat! The critics will attack you, but you have at least proved that you have read Shakespeare with understanding and profit, and that excuses much.)

To be honest, I shuddered when I received the challenge to scratching. I considered how badly the gay deceiver had treated me when, driven by jealousy and vengeance, I had attacked him, and I wished away the challenge that friend Muzius had procured for me. Muzius must have seen that I turned pale when I read the note demanding blood and must indeed have noticed my state of mind. "Brother Murr," he said, "it seems to me that the first duel you are to engage in is making you tremble." I did not hesitate to open my heart to my friend, to tell him what was shaking my courage.

"Oh my brother," said Muzius, "oh my dear Brother Murr! You have forgotten that at that time when the cocky villain beat you up in such a rude manner, you were still a green youth and not a valiant, fine *Bursch* as now. Also, your battle with the gay fellow was not a proper duel according to rule and regulation; it could not even be called an encounter, but was nothing more than a philistine-like scuffle, which is quite improper for a cat *Bursch*. Mark well, Brother Murr, man is jealous of our special gifts and accuses us of a predilection for rowing with each other in a dishonorable, disgraceful way, but when a member of his race becomes involved in something similar, he designates it with the insulting name of cat-fight![40] For that reason, a decent tomcat who has honor in his soul and insists on good manners will and must avoid

39. V, iv, 83 ff.
40. *Katzbalgerei*, a "brawl."

all encounters of that kind; he shames man who, under certain conditions, is very inclined to beat others and to be beaten. Therefore, dear brother, banish fear and timidity, guard your brave heart, and be assured that in a proper duel you can be avenged for all the evil done to you and can scratch the gay fellow to such an extent that he will give up stupid flirtations and foolish parading around for a while. But wait! It has just occurred to me that after what has taken place between you two, a duel with scratching cannot give adequate satisfaction, that you should fight in a more decisive manner, namely with the bite. We must hear the opinion of all the *Burschen*."

In a very serious speech Muzius explained to the assembled *Burschen* the incident that had occurred between me and the spotted cat. All agreed with the speaker, and so I sent word through Muzius to the spotted cat that I accepted the challenge but, because of the seriousness of the insult suffered, would not fight in any other way than with the bite. The spotted cat made objections, claiming he had dull teeth, etc.; since, however, Muzius explained to him in his serious and solemn way that there was no question of anything except a decisive duel with the bite and that if he did not wish to accept that, he would have to accept the name "no-good spitz," he decided to fight the duel with the bite. The night arrived when the duel was to take place. I stationed myself with Muzius at the appointed time on the roof of the house that was situated on the border of the quarter. My opponent arrived shortly with a distinguished tomcat, who was even more gayly spotted and had an even more defiant and bolder expression than he did. The latter was, as we assumed, his second; they had been comrades together on several campaigns, and both had been at the conquest of the pantry where the spotted cat earned the Order of the Burned Bacon. In addition—at Muzius's instigation, as I afterwards found out—a small, light-grey cat was present who supposedly knew a great deal about surgery and the proper way of treating the worst and most dangerous wounds, healing them in short order. It was now agreed that the duel would consist of three leaps, and if by the third leap nothing decisive had occurred, it would then be decided whether the duel should be continued with new leaps or if the affair was to be considered settled. The seconds paced off the distance, and we took our positions, facing each other. In accordance with the custom, the seconds cried out and we sprang at

each other. In a second my opponent seized my right ear just as I was going to grab him and bit it so hard that I screamed involuntarily. "Separate!" cried Muzius. The spotted cat let go and we returned to our original positions.

Another cry from the seconds, a second leap. Now I thought I would grab my opponent better, but the traitor ducked and bit my left paw so that thick drops of blood oozed from it. "Separate!" cried Muzius for the second time.

"Actually," my opponent's second said, turning to me, "actually the affair is settled, since you, my good fellow, are *hors de combat* because of the severe wound in your paw." But anger and fury prevented me from feeling any pain, and I replied that the third leap would show whether I was lacking strength and whether the affair was settled.

"Well," said the second with a mocking laugh, "well, if you really want to fall by the paw of your superior opponent, let your will be done."

But Muzius tapped me on the shoulder and cried, "Bravo, bravo, my Brother Murr, a true *Bursch* pays no heed to such a scratch. Be brave!"

For the third time the cry of the seconds, the third leap. In spite of my anger, I had noticed my opponent's trick; he always leaped sideways, which was why I missed him while he safely grabbed me. This time I was careful, leaped sideways also, and when he thought to seize me, I bit him in the neck so hard that he could not cry, only groan. "Separate!" cried my opponent's second now. I jumped back at once, the spotted cat collapsed unconscious, while blood poured profusely from his deep wound. The light-grey cat at once hurried over to him and to stop the bleeding used a household remedy which, Muzius assured me, she always had available, since she always carried it with her. She immediately poured a liquid into the wound and sprinkled the unconscious cat all over with it, which I believed had a strong and drastic effect because of its sharp, biting odor. It was not *thedenic arkebusade*,[41] nor was it eau de cologne. Muzius pressed me fervidly to his breast and said, "Brother Murr, you have fought your affair of honor like a tomcat whose heart is in the right place. Murr, you will attain the

41. An astringent liquid for wounds, invented by Johann Christian Anton Theden (1714–97).

pinnacle of *Burschentum*, you will not permit any stain on our honor and will always be on hand when it is necessary to defend it." My opponent's second, who had been assisting the light-grey surgeon for a long time, stepped over defiantly and claimed that in the third pass I had violated the code. But then Brother Muzius took a stance and declared with sparkling eyes and extended claws that whoever made such a statement would have to deal with him and that the matter could be decided right on the spot. The second considered it advisable not to reply but quietly loaded his wounded friend, who was regaining consciousness, on his back and marched off with him through the garret window. The grey surgeon asked whether she could fix my wounds with her household remedy. I refused, although my ear and paw were paining me, and started for home in high spirits at my victory and at my vengeance for Miesmies's seduction and for past blows.

I have written the story of my first duel in such detail for you, O cat youths, for a good reason. Besides this remarkable story teaching you about points of honor, you can also make many moral deductions from it which can be highly useful in your life; for example, that courage and bravery are useless against wiles and that, therefore, the exact study of wiles is essential to keep from being crushed and to maintain oneself. *"Chi no se ajuta, se nega,"*[42] says Brighella in Gozzi's *Glücklicher Bettler;* and the man is right, completely right. Understand that, cat youth, and do not despise wiles; for true wisdom lies hidden in them as in a rich lode.

When I returned, I found my master's door closed and had to make do with the straw mat there for my bed. My wounds had caused me to lose a lot of blood, and I felt faint. I felt myself being gently carried away. It was my good master who had heard me at the door (I may well have whimpered without knowing it), opened it, and noticed my wounds.

"Poor Murr," he cried, "what have they done to you? Those are terrific bites—well, I hope you didn't let your adversaries off easily!"

"Master," I thought, "if you only knew!" and again I felt exalted by the recollection of the well-fought victory and of the honor I had won. My good master placed me in my bed, got a little box out of the cupboard in which there was some salve, pre-

42. "He who does not help himself, belies himself."

pared two poultices, and put them on my ear and paw. Quietly and calmly I let him do this and only uttered a gentle little *Mrrr!* when the first bandage hurt me a little.

"You are," said my master, "a clever cat, Murr! You do not mistake your master's good intentions as do other snarling beasts of your race. Just rest quietly, and when it is time for you to cure your paw by licking it, the bandage will come off by itself. But you can do nothing for your wounded ear, poor fellow, and must put up with the bandage."

I promised my master that and gave him my good paw as a sign of my satisfaction and gratitude for his help; he took it as usual and shook it gently without pressing it in the slightest. My master knows how to act with educated cats.

I soon felt the healing effect of the poultice and was glad that I had not accepted the little grey surgeon's awful household remedy. Muzius, who visited me, found me cheerful and strong. I was soon in a condition to follow him to the *Burschen* tavern. It can be imagined with what indescribable joy I was received. I had become twice as popular.

From now on I lead the delightful life of a *Bursch* and was willing to overlook the fact that I was losing the best hairs from my fur. But is there any happiness down here that lasts forever? In every pleasure that one enjoys here, does there not lurk the—

(s.p.)—a high and steep hill; in a flat country it would have been considered a mountain. A broad, level road, bordered by fragrant bushes and with stone benches and arbors arranged at intervals on each side for the comfort of travelers, led up it. Having arrived at the summit, one was first aware of the size and splendor of the building that from a distance looked like a solitary church. Coats-of-arms, bishops' mitres, crooks, and crosses carved in stone above the door indicated that this had formerly been a bishop's residence; and the inscription *"Benedictus, qui venit in nomine domini"*[43] welcomed pious visitors. But all who entered stopped involuntarily, surprised, overwhelmed by the abbey, with its splendid facade, built in the style of Palladio,[44] which, with its two lofty, airy towers, formed the main building with wings at-

43. "Welcome to him who comes in the name of the Lord."

44. Andrea di Pietro, called il Palladio (1518–80), an Italian architect of the Renaissance.

tached on each side. The Abbot's rooms were in the main building; the monks' rooms, the refectory, other common rooms, as well as rooms for passing strangers, were in the wings. Not far from the monastery were the farm buildings, the dairy, and the overseer's house; down in the valley the lovely village Kanzheim encircled the hill with the Abbey like a gay, luxuriant wreath.

This valley extended to the base of the distant mountain. Numerous herds were grazing in the meadows that were crisscrossed by crystal brooks; country people from the scattered villages were walking gaily through the fertile cornfields; the joyful songs of birds echoed from the pleasant thickets; the yearning sound of horns called from the distant gloomy woodland; heavily laden boats with swift white sails glided along on the wide river that flowed through the valley; and the happy greetings of the boatmen could be heard. Everywhere rank abundance; everywhere constant, brisk activity, the richly bestowed blessing of nature. The view of the happy landscape from the Abbey's windows elevated the spirit and at the same time filled it with inner satisfaction.

It is possible that in spite of the noble, magnificent design, one could criticize the flamboyance and bad taste of the monks in the many bright, gilded carvings and pictures; but that only pointed up the pure style in which the Abbot's rooms were built and decorated. One stepped from the chapel choir directly into a large hall that served for the meetings of the clergy and also for the storing of instruments and music. A long corridor that was lined with Ionic columns led from this hall directly into the Abbot's chambers. Silken tapestries, choice paintings by the best masters of various schools, busts, statues of the great men of the Church, carpets, decorative inlaid floors, valuable utensils—everything pointed to the wealth of the well-endowed monastery. But this wealth that was everywhere evident was not that dazzling splendor that blinds the eye without refreshing it and which engenders amazement but not ease. Everything was in its appropriate place; there was nothing that ostentatiously called attention to itself and destroyed the effect of other objects, and so one did not think about the costliness of this or that particular ornament but felt charmed by the whole. It was the *appropriateness* of everything that produced this effect, and it may well be that it is a sure feeling for the appropriate which is what one usually calls good taste. The comfort and pleasantness of the Abbot's rooms bordered on luxury

without being actually luxurious, and therefore it was not offensive that a man of the Church had acquired and arranged everything that was there.

When he had come to Kanzheim several years ago, the Abbot Chrysostomus had had this apartment arranged as it was now; and his whole character, his whole mode of existence was revealed here before one saw him himself and became aware of the high level of his education. Still in his forties, large, well-built, an intelligent expression on his manly, handsome face, grace and dignity in his carriage, the Abbot inspired in all who approached him the reverence that his rank demanded. A zealous battler for the Church, a constant champion for the rights of his order and of his monastery, he seemed to be submissive and tolerant. But it was just this seeming tractability that was a weapon that he knew well how to wield to beat down all resistance, even that of the highest powers. If one suspected that monkish cunning was concealed behind the simple, ingratiating words that seemed to come from a most loyal heart, one only saw the cleverness of an eminent mind that understood the deeper affairs of the Church. The Abbot was a pupil of the propaganda in Rome. Not himself inclined to renounce the demands of life in so far as they were compatible with clerical custom and rule, he allowed his numerous subordinates all the freedom that they could claim according to their rank. Therefore, while some, dedicated to learning, studied in lonely cells, others wandered around gaily in the Abbey park and amused themselves with pleasant discussions; while some, inclined to enthusiastic reverence, fasted and spent their time in constant prayer, others enjoyed their meals at the well-provided table and restricted their religious practices to the rules of the order. While some did not wish to leave the Abbey, others went out on distant journeys and even, at times, exchanged the long gown of the priest for the short coat of the hunter and roamed around as valiant huntsmen. If the inclinations of the brothers were various, and if each might pursue his own as much as he might wish, they were all united in an enthusiastic partiality for music. Nearly everyone was a trained musician, and there were virtuosos among them who would have done honor to the best royal orchestra. An extensive musical collection, a selection of superior instruments made it possible for each to pursue the art of his choosing; and the frequent productions of choice works kept everyone in practice.

Kreisler's arrival at the Abbey gave new impetus to this musical activity. The scholars closed their books; the devout shortened their prayers; all gathered around Kreisler, whom they loved and whose works they valued more than any other's. The Abbot himself was attached to him with a deep friendship; and he, as well as the others, strove to show him their love and respect as far as they were able. Since the countryside where the Abbey was situated could be called a paradise; since the life in the monastery offered the greatest comfort, to which a delicious table and noble wine—which Father Hilarius attended to—were to be reckoned; since cheerfulness, which emanated from the Abbot himself, reigned among the brothers; since Kreisler, whom art ceaselessly engaged, was swimming in his element, it was inevitable that his agitated soul became calmer than it had been for a long time. Even the anger in his humor was softened; he became as gentle and mild as a child. But more than all that, he believed in himself; that ghostlike double that sprang from the drops of blood of his lacerated breast had vanished.

Somewhere it is said of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler that his friends had not been able to get him to write down his compositions,[45] but that if occasionally he did, no matter how great a pleasure he had expressed in doing so, he would promptly throw the work into the fire. This may have been true at that time which threatened the poor Johannes with irretrievable disaster, about which the present biographer does not yet know much. In the Abbey Kanzheim, at least, Kreisler took good care not to destroy the compositions which came from his soul, and his mood expressed itself in his works in a sweet, pleasant melancholy instead of his magically conjuring up—as he formerly had done so frequently—from the depths of harmony mighty spirits which aroused fear, horror, and all the agony of hopeless longing in the heart of man.

The last rehearsal of a high mass which Kreisler had finished and which was to be performed the next morning had been held one evening in the choir of the church. The brothers had returned to their cells; Kreisler alone lingered in the corridor lined with columns and looked out into the country which was spread out before him in the shimmer of the last rays of the setting sun. Then

45. In Hoffmann's *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier* [Fantasy pieces in the style of Callot], Volume 1.

it seemed to him as if he again heard in the distance his piece, which the brothers had just performed. When they sang the *Agnus Dei,*[46] the nameless rapture of those moments when he was creating this *Agnus* seized him again, but more powerfully. "No!" he cried, hot tears filling his eyes. "No! It is not I; only you, you, my only thought; you, my only desire!"

It was indeed wonderful how Kreisler had created this movement in which the Abbot and the brothers found an expression of ardent devotion, even of divine love. Quite filled by the high mass that he had begun to compose but had far from finished, he dreamed one night that the holy day for which the composition was intended had arrived, the high mass begun; he himself was standing at the pulpit, the finished score before him; the Abbot, himself reading the mass, was intoning, and his *kyrie* was beginning. One musical phrase after another followed; the production, profound and powerful, surprised him and carried him along to the *Agnus Dei.* Then he saw to his horror white papers among the score on which no notes were written; the brothers looked at him as he suddenly let his baton sink, waiting for him to begin and for the interruption to be over. But embarrassment and fear weighed him down like lead, and although he had the whole *Agnus Dei* in his mind, he could not compose the full score. Then there suddenly appeared a lovely, angelic figure that stepped to the pulpit and sang the *Agnus* with the sounds of heaven; and this angelic figure was Julia! Kreisler awoke in a wild rapture and wrote down the Agnus that had been revealed to him in his dream. And Kreisler dreamed this dream again now; he heard Julia's voice; the waves of the song beat higher and higher, and when the chorus joined with *"Dona nobis pacem,"* he was almost submerged in a sea of a thousand rapturous delights that poured over him.

A light tap on the shoulder awoke Kreisler from his ecstasy. It was the Abbot who stood before him and looked at him fondly.

"Is it not so," began the Abbot, "is it not so, my son Johannes, that your whole soul is rejoicing now in that which your spirit felt deeply and which you succeeded so magnificently in calling into life? I believe you were thinking of your high mass, which I consider one of the best pieces that you have ever composed."

Kreisler stared at the Abbot in silence; he was still unable to say a word.

46. From Hoffmann's *Missa in D* (1805).

"Well, well," continued the Abbot smiling, "come down from the higher regions to which you have flown. I do believe that you are composing in your mind and never cease the work that is indeed a pleasure to you, although a dangerous one, since it consumes all your strength. Dismiss now these creative thoughts; let us stroll up and down in these cool passageways and chat openly with each other."

The Abbot spoke about the organization of the monastery, of the monks' manner of living, boasted of the truly cheerful, reverent minds of all of them, and finally asked the Kapellmeister whether he (the Abbot) was not mistaken when he thought he had noticed that in the few months Kreisler had spent at the Abbey he had become calmer, more open, more inclined to the active pursuit of the high art that glorifies service to the Church.

Kreisler could not but admit this and assured him that the Abbey had opened itself to him like an asylum to which he had fled and that he felt as at home as if he were a brother of the order and that he would never leave the monastery.

"Allow me," Kreisler concluded, "allow me, worthy sir, the deception which this garment promotes. Let me believe that, driven off course by a dangerous storm, the mercy of an appeased fate allowed me to be stranded on an island where I can remain concealed, where the beautiful dream that is nothing other than artistic inspiration can no longer be destroyed."

"Indeed," replied the Abbot, his face glowing with a special friendliness, "indeed, my son Johannes, the garment which you have put on in order to appear as our brother becomes you, and I wish you would never take it off. You are the worthiest Benedictine monk there is."

"But," continued the Abbot after a short pause, seizing Kreisler's hand, "but, this is not a joke. You know, my Johannes, how dear you have been to me from the moment when I first met you, how my sincere friendship, allied with a high respect for your superior talent, has steadily grown. One is filled with concern for those one loves, and it is this concern which has caused me to observe you anxiously during your stay in the monastery. The results of these observations have given me a conviction which I cannot abandon. For a long time I have wished to open my heart to you about this; I have been waiting for a favorable moment; it has come! Kreisler! Renounce the world; enter our order!"

However much Kreisler enjoyed his stay at the Abbey, however welcome it was to him to be able to prolong a visit that gave him peace and quiet while he pursued his artistic activities, still, the Abbot's suggestion surprised him in an almost disagreeable way, since he had never seriously thought of giving up his freedom and immuring himself with the monks forever, although such a whim may have occurred to him from time to time and might have been observed by the Abbot. Quite amazed, he stared at the Abbot, who, however, did not let him speak, but continued: "First listen to me quietly, Kreisler, before you answer. It is important to me to win a good servant to the Church, but the Church itself rejects all artificial persuasions and only wishes to stir the inner spark of true recognition so that it will be fanned to a bright flame of belief and destroy all delusions. And so I only wish to unfold what lies dark and confused in your heart and bring it to your clear knowledge. May I then, my Johannes, speak to you of the superstitious prejudices which one harbors in the world about the monastic life? Some dreadful fate is always supposed to have driven the monk into seclusion, where, renouncing all worldly joys, he passes his life in sorrow. In that case, the monastery would be a dark prison where desolate sorrow for eternally lost happiness; where despair and the insanity of invented self-torture are immured; where wasted, pale skeletons drag out a miserable existence and utter their agonizing fear in somber prayers!"

Kreisler could not keep from laughing, for while the Abbot was talking about wasted, pale skeletons, he thought of all the well-nourished Benedictines and especially of the strong, red-cheeked Hilarius, who knew no greater misery than drinking wine of a bad vintage and whose only fear was of a new musical score which he did not understand immediately.

"You smile," continued the Abbot, "you smile at the contrast of the picture I have sketched with the monastic life that you have learned to know, and you certainly have good reason to. It may be true that many, lacerated by earthly sorrows, abandoning all happiness, all joy, renouncing the world forever, flee to the monastery; and they are fortunate that the Church accepts them and that they can find a peace in her lap that can comfort them for all their past sorrows and can lift them above the dreadful turmoil of the world. But how many there are whom the true innate inclination for the

reverent, contemplative life guide to the monastery, who, out of place in the world, constantly confused by the press of little matters that life begets, only feel comfortable in self-chosen isolation. Then there are others, however, who, without a specific inclination for the monastic life, do not really belong anywhere else but in a monastery. I mean those who are and remain strangers in the world because they belong to a higher existence, who consider the claims of this higher existence as the claims of life but pursue relentlessly that which is not to be found here on earth, always thirsting with a yearning that cannot be sated, drifting here and there, seeking in vain for peace and quiet, whose vulnerable breast is struck by every arrow shot and for whose wounds there is no other balsam than the bitter ridiculing of the enemy ever armed against them. Only solitude, a monotonous life without hostile interruption and, above all, the constant open view of the world of light to which they belong can establish their equilibrium and let them feel a spiritual satisfaction that is not to be obtained in the confused turmoil of the world. And you—you, my Johannes, belong to these people whom the eternal power through earthly grievances raises to the divine. That active awareness of a higher existence that will always alienate you, must alienate you, from narrow earthly activities radiates powerfully from your art, which belongs to another world and which, a holy secret of divine love, is locked with yearning in your breast. This art is the most ardent reverence itself; and you, who are completely devoted to it, have nothing in common with worldly trifles, which you hurl from yourself with scorn as a youth his boyhood toys. Flee forever the foolish games of the mocking fools who have often wounded you, my poor Johannes. Your friend opens his arms to receive you, to guide you to the safe haven where no storm threatens!"

"I feel," spoke Johannes seriously and solemnly when the Abbot stopped, "I feel the truth of your words very deeply, my respected friend—that I do not belong in a world that appears to me like an eternal, puzzling mistake. And yet—I confess it freely—the thought of wearing this garment at the expense of so many convictions that I imbibed along with my mother's milk, a garment that is like a prison from which one may never depart, arouses horror in me. It seems to me that the same world in which the Kapellmeister Johannes found so many pretty, little gardens full

of fragrant flowers would suddenly seem a barren unfruitful wilderness to the monk Johannes, as if, when once involved in life, renunciation—"

"Renunciation," the Abbot interrupted the Kapellmeister in a louder voice. "Renunciation? Is it renunciation for you, Johannes, if the spirit of art becomes more and more powerful in you, if you fly to the shining clouds with strong wings? What worldly pleasure exists which could still delude you? But," the Abbot continued in a gentler voice, "but the eternal power has placed a feeling in our breast that convulses our entire being with its invincible power; it is the mysterious tie that unites soul and body whilst the former believes itself striving for the highest ideal of a chimerical happiness and yet only desires what the latter claims as an essential need, and so a reciprocal action arises which is necessary for the continued existence of the human race. I do not need to add that I am speaking about sexual love and that I consider it no small thing to renounce it completely. But, Johannes, if you renounce it, you will save yourself from destruction; never, never will you or can you participate in the illusory happiness of earthly love."

The Abbot spoke the last words so solemnly, with such unction, as if the book of fate lay open before him and he were announcing to poor Kreisler all the approaching sorrow, to escape which he must flee to the monastery.

There began on Kreisler's face that curious twitching of the muscles that proclaimed the spirit of irony that had mastered him. "Ho ho," he said, "ho ho! Your Reverence is wrong, completely wrong. Your Reverence is mistaken about my person, has become confused by the garment which I have put on to fool people for a while *en masque* and, unperceived, to write their names in their hands so that they will know what they are about. Am I not then a tolerable person, still in his best years, sufficiently good looking and adequately educated and well mannered? Can I not brush my very beautiful black frockcoat, put it on, and for the rest, dressed completely in silk, step up to any red-cheeked professor's daughter, or blue-eyed or brown-eyed daughter of a councillor, and all sweetness in my elegant amorous gestures, expression, and tone, ask her without further ado, 'Most beautiful young lady, will you give me your hand and your worthy self in addition as a pledge?' And the professor's daughter would cast down her eyes and whisper quite softly, 'Speak with papa' or the councillor's

daughter would give me an adoring look and then assure me how she had long noticed the love to which I had just given utterance, and incidentally mention the possession of a bridal gown. And oh Lord, the respective fathers! How gladly they would be rid of their daughters to such a respectable person as a Grand Ducal ex-Kapellmeister! But I could also aspire to a higher romanticism, an idyl, and offer the lively farmer's daughter my heart and my hand just when she is preparing goat's cheese, or, a second Pistofolus,[47] run to the mill and seek my goddess among the heavenly clouds of flour! Where would a true, honorable heart be misunderstood that only wants marriage—marriage—marriage! Not be lucky in love? Your Reverence does not realize that I am precisely the right man to be quite horrendously lucky in *that* love, the simple theme of which is nothing else than, 'If you want me, I will take you!' the further variations of which are then played during marriage after the *allegro brillante* of the wedding. Your Reverence is also unaware of the fact that I have already several times seriously considered getting married. I was, indeed, at that time a young man of little experience and education, namely, only seven years old; but the thirty-three-year-old miss whom I selected for my bride solemnly promised to take no other husband than me, and I myself do not know why the matter later fell through. Your Reverence should only note that love's happiness smiled on me from childhood on; and now—give me silk stockings—give me silk stockings—give me shoes, so I can go wooing and run full speed after the girl who has already extended her sweet finger for a ring. If it were not improper for an honorable Benedictine to jump around like a hare,[48] I would on the spot before Your Reverence dance a hornpipe or a gavotte or a polka out of the pure joy which seizes me when I think of a bride and a wedding. Ho ho! In regard to happiness in love and marriage I am a fine fellow indeed! I only wish that Your Reverence would realize that."

"I did not," replied the Abbot when Kreisler finally stopped, "I did not wish to interrupt your strange, humorous tirade, Kapellmeister; it proves exactly what I have already stated. I feel in-

47. Pistofolus is the main character in the opera *La Molinara* (1788) by Giovanni Paesiello. It will be recalled that at the party at court, when Kreisler and Julia sang so movingly, Princess Hedwiga objected to such emotional music and Kreisler destroyed the solemnity by singing a selection from this opera.

48. This time it is Kreisler who describes himself as a hare, i.e., a fool.

deed the thorn that is supposed to wound me but which has not. It is a good thing that I never believed in that chimerical love that hovers in the clouds and is supposed to have nothing in common with the human state. How is it possible that with your neurotic, spiritual tension—but enough of that. It is time to approach nearer to the hostile enemy that pursues you. Did you not hear of the fate of that unfortunate painter, that Leonhard Ettlinger, during your stay in Sieghartshof?"

An uneasy fear caused Kreisler to shudder when the Abbot mentioned this name. Every trace of bitter irony was erased from his face, and he asked in a somber tone, "Ettlinger? Ettlinger? What is he to me? What do I have to do with him? I have never known him; it was only my heated fantasy that made me once think that he was speaking to me from the water."

"Quiet," said the Abbot gently and mildly, taking Kreisler's hand. "Quiet, my son Johannes! You have nothing in common with that unfortunate man who was destroyed by the aberration of a passion that had become too powerful. But let his fate serve you as a warning. My son, Johannes! You are treading more slippery paths than he; therefore flee—flee! Hedwiga! Johannes! A bad dream holds the Princess firmly in bonds that cannot be broken unless a free soul cuts them!—and you?"

A thousand thoughts arose in Kreisler at the Abbot's words. He realized that the Abbot was not only informed about all the occurrences at the royal house at Sieghartshof, but also about what had happened during his stay there. It became clear to him that the Princess's abnormal sensitivity in his presence indicated a danger of which he had been unaware, and who else could harbor this fear and wish him to depart for good but Benzon? Benzon must be in communication with the Abbot and must have been informed about his (Kreisler's) stay at the Abbey; and so she was at the bottom of all this reverent gentleman's actions. He recalled vividly all the moments in which the Princess had appeared as if caught in an incipient passion, but he did not know why the thought that he himself could be the object of this passion should affect him like the fear of ghosts. It seemed to him as if a foreign, spiritual power were trying to penetrate his soul and rob him of all freedom of thought. Princess Hedwiga suddenly stood before him, staring at him with that strange look that was peculiarly hers; and in that moment a shock vibrated through his nerves as it had that first

time when he had touched the Princess's hand. But it also seemed to him as if that mysterious fear had left him; he felt a beneficial electric warmth glide through him and he spoke softly as if in a dream, "Little, mischievous electric eel, are you teasing me again? Yet you know that you cannot wound without punishment since I have become a Benedictine monk out of pure love for you."

The Abbot stared at the Kapellmeister as if he wished to look right into his innermost self and then began, seriously and solemnly, "With whom are you speaking, my son Johannes?"

Kreisler awoke from his dreams; it occurred to him that if the Abbot was informed of everything that had occurred at Sieghartshof, he must also know about the further course of the catastrophe that had driven him away; and it was important for him to find out more about it.

"I spoke," he replied to the Abbot with a comical smile, "I only spoke, Your Reverence, as you heard, with a mischievous electric eel which wanted to get mixed up in our conversation without being asked and to confuse me even more than I already am. But to my great sorrow, I realize from all this that various people consider me just as great a fool as the deceased court portraitist Leonhardus Ettlinger, who wished not merely to paint but also to love a noble person, and in the quite ordinary way that Hansel does his Gretel. Oh Lord, have I ever failed to show respect when I played the most beautiful chords for the most ordinary singing? Have I ever dared to play unsuitable or whimsical material about rapture and pain, love and hate, when little royal stubbornness wanted to behave in all sorts of strange and funny ways and vex people with magnetic visions? Have I ever done that? Say—"

"But," the Abbot interrupted him, "but you once spoke, my Johannes, of the love of the artist—"

Kreisler stared at the Abbot; then he cried, clapping his hands together and causing a glance upwards, "Oh heavens, that too! Estimable people," he continued, while that comical smile again distorted his face, and his deep sorrow nearly choked him; "estimable people, have you not heard somewhere, possibly on the ordinary stage when Prince Hamlet says to an honorable man called Guildenstern, 'You can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me'?[49]

49. III, ii, 347.

Lord—that is just my case! Why do you listen to the inoffensive Kreisler if the harmony of love which is locked in his breast sounds dissonant to you? Oh Julia!"

The Abbot, suddenly surprised by something quite unexpected, seemed to seek in vain for words, while Kreisler stood before him staring with rapture at the sea of fire that spread across the evening sky.

Then the sound of bells came from the Abbey towers and drifted like wonderful voices of heaven through the golden, shining evening clouds. "With you," cried Kreisler, stretching out his arms, "with you will I go, you chords! Carried aloft by you, all hopeless sorrow must turn to me and destroy itself in my own breast; and your voices, like divine messengers of peace, shall declare that pain has been submerged in the hope and in the yearning of eternal love."

"It is ringing for evening prayer," said the Abbot, "I hear the brothers coming. Tomorrow, my dear friend, we will perhaps talk about many things that occurred at Sieghartshof."

"Oh," cried Kreisler, who suddenly remembered what he wished to learn from the Abbot, "Oh, Your Reverence, I wish to learn of the merry wedding and such. Prince Hektor will not hesitate now to seize the hand for which he has been reaching from afar? Nothing unpleasant has happened to the bridegroom?"

All solemnity vanished from the Abbot's face, and he spoke with the cheerful humor that was his usual mood. "Nothing has happened to the splendid bridegroom, my honest Johannes; but it is said that a wasp stung his adjutant in the forest."

"Ho ho," replied Kreisler, "ho ho! A wasp, whom he wished to drive away with fire and smoke!"

The brothers entered the corridor and—

(M.c.)—evil enemy who seeks to snatch the good tidbits right from the mouth of an honest, inoffensive cat? It was not long before our happy roof club received a blow which quite destroyed it. That evil enemy that is death to the comfort of all cats appeared in the shape of a powerful, furious philistine named Achilles. He could be compared with his Homeric namesake in few respects unless one assumed that his heroism consisted primarily in a certain clumsy awkwardness and in rude, empty phrases. Achilles was really a common butcher's dog employed, however, as a watchdog;

and the master with whom he was in service, in order to strengthen his attachment to the house, kept him chained up so that he was only free to run around during the night. Many of us felt very sorry for him in spite of his irritable nature; but he did not let the loss of his freedom upset him, since he was foolish enough to think that the burdensome chain redounded to his honor and was decorative. To his no small annoyance, Achilles found his sleep disturbed by our nocturnal parties that took place when he was supposed to run around and guard the house against all evil; and he threatened us, who disturbed him, with death and destruction. But since he could not get up to the attic, let alone to the roof, because of his clumsiness, we did not pay the least attention to these threats, but carried on as before. Achilles took other steps; he began his war against us, as does a good general many a battle, with masked attacks and then with open skirmishes.

Various spitzes, whom Achilles sometimes honored by playing with them, pushing them around with his clumsy paws, at his command barked so loudly as soon as we began our song that we could not hear ourselves at all. Even worse! Some of these philistine servants penetrated to the attic and, without entering into honorable battle with us when we showed our claws, made such a fearful noise with their barking that if the watchdog had been disturbed before, now the master of the house could not close one eye; and as this fearful racket gave no signs of ceasing, he seized his whip to drive off the rioters who raged above his head.

Oh tomcat, you who read this, if you have a manly heart in your breast and a lucid mind in your head, if you do not have a spoiled ear, have you ever heard anything more horrible, unpleasant, and hateful than the yapping, barking, dissonant sounds of enraged spitzes? Look out for these little, wiggling, friendly, charming creatures, tomcat; do not trust them. Believe me, a spitz's friendship is more dangerous than the tiger's extended claws! Let us pass over the bitter experiences which we have unfortunately only too often had in this area and return to the further course of our story.

As I said, the man seized his whip to drive off the rioters from the attic. But what happened? The spitzes wagged their tails at the enraged man, licked his feet, and pretended that all the racket had been made for the sake of his peace even though he had been disturbed so thoroughly. They had merely barked to chase us off the

roof as we were doing all sorts of dreadful things up there, singing songs in much too shrill voices, etc. The man allowed himself to be persuaded by the spitzes' glibness when the watchdog, whom he did not neglect to question, confirmed it in the bitter hate he bore us. Persecution now struck us! Everywhere we were driven away by servants with broomsticks, by roof tiles hurled at us; even snares were set for us in which we were to be trapped and in which we really were. Even my dear friend Muzius got into trouble—i.e., into a trap, which crushed his right hindfoot horribly.

Our happy community life was over, and I went back under my master's stove, mourning in solitude the fate of my unhappy friend.

One day Herr Lothario, the Professor of Esthetics, came in my master's room, and behind him—in sprang Ponto.

I cannot possibly tell you what an unpleasant, uncomfortable feeling the sight of Ponto caused me. Even if he were neither a watchdog nor a spitz, he still belonged to the race whose hostile attitude had destroyed my life in the merry cat *Burschen* society; and therefore, in spite of all the friendship he had showed me, I did not trust him. Besides, something arrogant and mocking seemed to lurk in Ponto's glance, and I therefore decided not to speak to him at all. Very quietly I crept from my cushion and with one leap landed in the stove, the door of which was open and which I closed behind me.

Herr Lothario spoke now about a lot of things with my master which aroused my interest little, since I had directed all my attention to young Ponto who, after dancing around the room, humming a song in a simpering way, jumped up on the window seat, looked out the window, and as braggarts do, constantly nodded to passing acquaintances, even yipping a bit to attract the glances of the passing beauties of his race. The frivolous creature did not seem to think of me at all; and even though, as I have said, I did not want to speak to him, I did not think it right that he did not inquire after me, that he took no notice of me.

The Professor of Esthetics, Herr Lothario, was of quite a different and, it seemed to me, of a nicer and more sensible opinion, who, after looking all around the room for me, said to my master, "Well, where is your excellent Monsieur Murr?"

For an honest cat *Bursch,* there is no more unpleasant desig-

nation than that disagreeable word *monsieur*.[50] However, one must put up with a good deal with Professors of Esthetics, and so I pardoned him the insult.

Meister Abraham explained that for some time I had been leading my own life and that I was seldom home, especially at night, and then I would return tired and exhausted. I had just been lying on the cushion, and he really did not know where I had vanished to so quickly.

" I suspect," continued the Professor, "I almost suspect, Meister Abraham, that your Murr—but is he hidden somewhere here listening? Let us look around a bit." Quietly I retreated to the back of the stove, but one can imagine how I pricked up my ears since they were talking about me. The Professor searched all the corners in vain, to the no little astonishment of my master, who laughed, "Really, Professor, you do my Murr an unbelievable honor!"

"Ho ho," replied the Professor. "I have not lost the suspicion that I harbor toward you, Meister, because of the pedagogical experiment by which a tomcat became a poet and writer. Have you forgotten the sonnet, the "comment" that my Ponto snatched right from under Murr's paw? But never mind, I am using Murr's absence to impart to you a terrible suspicion and to recommend earnestly that you watch Murr's behavior. Although I usually do not pay any attention to cats, still it has not escaped me that many cats who were once polite and mannerly suddenly assume a character that greatly offends against all manners and customs.

"Instead of cringing humbly as formerly, they parade around proudly and do not hesitate to reveal their original wild nature by fiery glances and angry growling, even showing their claws. Just as they care little about a modest, quiet deportment, they are as little concerned about outwardly appearing as civilized men of the world. There is no more cleaning of the whiskers, no polishing of the fur with the tongue, or biting off of claws that have grown too long; they run around, their fur matted, their tail bristly, an abomination to all educated cats. What seems particularly blameworthy and must not be tolerated are the secret meetings that they hold at night, carrying on in a foolish way, doing what they call

50. The members of the *Burschenschaften* were strongly anti-French.

singing, although there is nothing to be heard but nonsensical cries that are completely lacking in a suitable beat and regulated melody and harmony. I fear, I fear, Meister Abraham, that your Murr is showing his bad side and is participating in those improper amusements which can earn him nothing but blows. I would be very sorry if all the effort you have expended on the little grey cat were in vain and he were stooping to the common, vulgar activity of ordinary depraved cats." When I heard my good Muzius, my true-hearted brothers so crudely misunderstood, a cry of pain escaped me involuntarily.

"What was that?" cried the Professor. "I do believe Murr is hidden in the room! Ponto! *Allons!* Go find him!" With one leap Ponto was down from the window seat and was snuffling around the room. He stopped in front of the stove door, growled, barked, jumped around.

"He is in the stove; there is no doubt of it!" said my master and opened the door. I stayed calmly sitting there and looked at my master with clear, shining eyes. "Truly," cried my master, "truly, there he sits quite in back in the stove. Well? Will you kindly come out? Come out!"

Although I had little desire to leave my hiding place, I had to obey my master's command since I did not want violence to occur, for I would get the short end of it. Therefore, I crept slowly out. I had scarcely emerged into the daylight when the two of them, the Professor and my master, cried, "Murr! Murr! What do you look like! What have you been up to!"

I was completely covered with ashes, and in addition, my coat had really suffered recently and I had to recognize myself in the description that the Professor had made of schismatic cats, and I could well imagine the wretched figure I cut. If I compared my miserable figure with that of my friend Ponto, who looked quite pretty in his elegant, shining, beautifully curled coat, I was filled with a deep shame, and I crept silently and unhappily into the corner.

"Is that," cried the Professor, "is that the intelligent, cultured Kater Murr, the elegant writer, the witty poet who writes sonnets and commentaries? No, that is a common cat who lives in the kitchen by the hearth and only understands how to catch mice in the cellars and attics. Ho ho, tell me, my well-bred animal, whether you hope to be promoted soon or even become a Professor of Esthetics?

Indeed, that is a nice doctoral gown you have thrown around yourself."

Thus he continued with his mocking phrases. What could I do except what I always did when harassed, and flatten my ears.

Finally the Professor and my master burst out in a raucous laughter that pierced my heart. Ponto's behavior was almost more irritating. He not only expressed his scorn of me by faces and gestures; he also showed his hesitation in getting close to me by all sorts of side-leaps, probably fearing that he would get his beautiful clean fur dirty. It is no small thing for a cat who is so aware of his excellence to have to endure such contempt from a foppish poodle.

The Professor now got involved in a long conversation with my master that did not seem to have any reference to me and my race and of which I actually understood only little. But I did understand that they were discussing whether it was better to oppose the frequently disorderly, unbridled activity of high-strung youths with open force or only to restrict it in clever, imperceptible ways and to give them time to come to a recognition of themselves, when such activity is then abandoned of its own accord. The Professor was for open force, since the public weal requires that every person, no matter how much he resists, must be pressed as early as possible into the mold that is determined by the relationship of the individual parts to the whole, as otherwise a monstrosity would arise which could cause all kinds of mischief. The Professor mentioned something about hissing at people and smashing windows, which I did not understand at all. My master said, on the other hand, that young, high-strung spirits were like half-insane people, whom open resistance only makes more mad, whereas their own recognition of the error cures them completely without any fear of any backsliding.

"Well," cried the Professor finally, standing up and seizing his cane and hat, "well, Meister, in regard to public force against high-strung behavior, you will at least have to concede that I am right that it must be used without mercy when that kind of activity becomes destructive and, to return to your Kater Murr, it is a good thing that, as I have heard, the efficient spitzes have scattered the cursed cats that sang so badly while imagining themselves terrific virtuosos."

"That depends," replied my master. "If they had been allowed to sing, they might have become what they mistakenly thought they

were, namely, really great virtuosos, instead of which they may now doubt completely in virtuosity."

The Professor said goodbye; Ponto leaped after him without honoring me with a farewell, as he had always done with great friendliness.

"I," my master now turned to me, "I have not been pleased with your behavior, Murr, and it is time for you to become orderly and reasonable, so that you will acquire a better reputation than you now seem to have. If it were possible for you to understand me, I would advise you to be always quiet and friendly and to complete everything that you begin without a lot of noise, for in this way one best acquires a good reputation. As examples, let me tell you about two people, one of whom sits quietly in a corner all day and drinks one bottle of wine after another until he is completely drunk, a condition he knows from long practice how to conceal so that no one suspects it. The other one, on the other hand, only occasionally drinks a glass of wine in the company of his good, cheerful friends. Drinking loosens his tongue and he talks excitedly, although without offending decency; but it is he the world labels a passionate wine drinker, while that secret drunkard is considered a quiet, temperate man. Oh, my good Kater Murr! If you knew the course of the world, you would realize that a philistine who pulls in his horns has the best of it. But how can you know what a philistine is, although there may be enough of them among your kind."

At these words of my master, well aware of my superior knowledge of cats which I had acquired from the teachings of that fine Muzius as well as from my own experience, I could not resist a loud, happy purr.

"Oh," laughed my master loudly, "oh, Murr, my tomcat! I do believe you understand me and the Professor is right in claiming he has discovered a special intelligence in you, and even fearing you as his rival in esthetics."

In confirmation that this was really so, I uttered a very clear, fine-sounding meow and jumped up on my master's lap. I had not noticed that my master had on his best dressing gown, which was made of yellow silk material with large flowers on it and which I could not avoid soiling. With an angry "Get down!" my master knocked me so violently off his lap that I turned a somersault and, terrified, squatted on the floor with my ears flat and my eyes closed.

Praised be my master's good nature, however! "Well," he said in a friendly tone, "well, well, Murr, my cat! I didn't mean it that badly! I know your intentions were good; you wished to show me affection, but you did it in a clumsy way and so who thinks about intentions! Come here, my little grubby one; I must clean you so that you will again look like a decent cat."

My master took off his dressing gown, picked me up, and did not shrink from brushing my fur with a soft brush until it was clean; and then he combed my hair until it shone.

When he had finished, I paraded back and forth in front of the mirror, and I was astounded how I had so suddenly changed into a different cat. I could not help purring with pleasure at my appearance. I seemed so handsome, and I cannot deny that in that moment doubt about the decency and value of the *Burschen* club stirred in me. I thought it a real barbarism that I had crept into the stove, which I could only ascribe to a kind of degeneration; and therefore my master's warning, "Don't crawl into the stove again!" was not even necessary.

During the following night it seemed to me that I heard a faint scratching at the door and a timid meow that seemed familiar. I crept over and asked who was there. The good Senior Puff (I recognized him immediately by his voice) replied, "It is I, faithful Brother Murr, and I bring you very sad news." Oh heavens, what—

(s.p.)"—done a great injustice, my dear, sweet friend. No! You are more to me than that, my true sister! I have not loved you enough, not trusted you enough. For the first time I am opening my heart to you, since I know—"

The Princess hesitated; a flood of tears poured from her eyes; again she pressed Julia tenderly to her breast.

"Hedwiga," said Julia gently, "didn't you always love me with all your heart? Did you ever have secrets that you did not wish to entrust to me? What do you know? What have you just discovered? But no, no! Not another word until this pulse again beats calmly, until your eyes do not shine so sadly."

"I do not know," replied the Princess, suddenly irritated. "I do not know what all of you want. I am still supposed to be sick, and I have never felt stronger. The strange attack I had has frightened you, and yet it may be that such electric fits which stop my whole organism are necessary to me and more useful than all the

remedies which a silly, pitiful skill in wretched self-deception offers me. How annoying he is to me, this doctor, who thinks he can treat human nature as if it were a clock that needed cleaning and winding! He makes me shudder with his drops and his essences. Is my health supposed to be dependent on such things? Then life here would be a frightful joke of the world spirit."

"And," Julia interrupted the Princess, "and it is just this tension that is the proof that you are still ill, my Hedwiga, and should spare yourself more than you really do."

"You too wish to hurt me!" cried the Princess; and she jumped up, hurried to the window, which she opened, and looked out at the park. Julia followed her, put an arm around her, and begged her with tender sadness to avoid the raw autumn wind and to allow herself the rest that the doctor considered so beneficial. The Princess replied that she felt refreshed and strengthened by the cold air that entered through the window.

Julia now spoke from the bottom of her heart about the recent past when a dark, ominous spirit had reigned and how they had had to muster all their inner strength so as not to be destroyed by the many events that aroused in her a feeling which could only be compared to a real fear of ghosts. Among these she counted primarily the mysterious dissension that had arisen between Prince Hektor and Kreisler and which foreboded evil, for it was only too certain that the poor Johannes was to have fallen at the hand of the vengeful Italian and, as Meister Abraham had assured them, had only been saved by a miracle.

"And," said Julia, "and this fearful man—he is to be your husband? No! Never! Thanks to the eternal powers! You are saved! He will never return, will he, Hedwiga? Never!"

"Never!" replied the Princess in a somber, scarcely audible voice. Then she sighed deeply and continued speaking softly as if in a dream. "This pure, heavenly fire must only shine and warm without destroying with its harmful flames, and from the artist's soul shines the embodied longing—itself—his love. You spoke thus, in this place."

"Who," cried Julia quite aghast, "who spoke thus? Of whom are you thinking, Hedwiga?"

The Princess rubbed her forehead with her hand as if to recall the present from which she had slipped away. Then she

staggered to the sofa, supported by Julia, and lay down quite exhausted. Julia was about to summon the ladies-in-waiting, as she was concerned about the Princess, but Hedwiga pulled her down gently onto the sofa, whispering softly, "No, my girl! *You,* only *you,* are to stay with me; do not think that an illness has overcome me. No, it was the thought of the highest bliss which became too strong, which threatened to break my heart, and whose divine raptures seemed like deadly pain. Stay with me, girl, you do not know what a wonderful magical effect you have on me! Let me look into your soul as into a clear, pure mirror, so that I may recognize myself again! Julia! It often seems to me that you have divine inspiration, and the words that drift across your lips like the breath of love are comforting prophecies. Julia! Girl, stay with me; never leave me—never!"

The Princess sank back on the sofa, her eyes closed, firmly clasping Julia's hands.

Julia was quite accustomed to moments when Hedwiga succumbed to a neurotic tension; but the present paroxysm seemed strange, quite strange and mysterious to her. Usually it was a passionate bitterness, produced by a conflict between her emotions and the realities of life, intensifying almost to odiousness, wounding Julia's childlike soul. Now Hedwiga seemed, as never before, quite dissolved in pain and nameless melancholy; and this bleak state touched Julia as her fear for her friend increased.

"Hedwiga," she cried, "my Hedwiga, I will never leave you! No truer heart loves you than mine; but tell me, oh do tell me, do trust me—what agony lacerates your soul? I will sorrow with you, I will weep with you!"

A strange smile spread across Hedwiga's face, a gentle flush suffused her cheeks, and without opening her eyes, she whispered softly, "Tell me, Julia, you are not in love, are you?"

Julia felt herself strangely affected by the Princess's question, as if a sudden fear had struck her.

In what young girl's breast do not stir the premonitions of passion, the essence of existence, for only the woman who loves is wholely a woman. But a pure, childlike, naïve mind ignores these premonitions, is not anxious to investigate further, does not lust to solve the sweet mystery which will only be revealed at the moment which is intuitively anticipated. Thus it was with Julia, who

suddenly heard spoken what she had not dared to think; and it frightened her as if she were being accused of a sin which she did not clearly understand, and she tried to look into her soul.

"Julia," repeated the Princess. "You are not in love? Tell me! Be honest."

"How strangely," replied Julia, "how strangely you ask. What can I, what should I answer?"

"Speak, oh speak," begged the Princess. Then it became as clear as glass in Julia's soul and she found words to express what she clearly saw in herself.

"What," Julia began very seriously and composed, "what is going on in you, Hedwiga, that you ask me in such a way? What is love to you, this love of which you speak? One should feel drawn to the loved one by such an irresistible power that one feels one only exists, only lives, when thinking of him; that one gives up one's whole self for him, so that he alone seems to us to be all longing, all hopes, all desires, and the whole world. And this passion is supposed to give us the greatest existing bliss? This height makes me dizzy, for the bottomless abyss with all the horror of inevitable destruction yawns beneath me. No, Hedwiga, that love, which is just as terrible as it is sinful, has not taken hold of my soul; and I will hold firmly to the belief that my soul will always stay pure and free from it. But it might happen that one man more than any other could arouse the highest respect, even true admiration, for his masculine, superior strength. And even more than that, in his presence we feel mysteriously filled with a certain well-being, exalted; it seems as if our spirit is truly awakening, as if life were truly glowing, and so we are happy when he comes and sad when he goes. Do you call this love? Well, why shouldn't I confess to you that our vanished Kreisler has awakened this feeling in me and that I miss him painfully."

"Julia," cried the Princess, suddenly sitting up and piercing Julia with her glance, "Julia, can you imagine him in the arms of another woman without dying in nameless agony?"

Julia flushed scarlet, and in a tone that showed how offended she was, she replied, "Never have I thought of *him* in my arms!"

"Ha! You do not love him—you do not love him!" shrieked the Princess, and again sank back on the sofa.

"Oh," said Julia, "oh that he might return! Pure and guiltless is the feeling that I harbor in my breast for the dear man; and

if I never see him again, the thought of him, whom I cannot forget, will shine in my life like a beautiful, bright star. But surely he will return! For how can—"

"Never," the Princess interrupted Julia in a harsh, cutting tone. "Never can he, nor may he return; for it has been learned that he is in the Abbey Kanzheim and will withdraw from the world and enter the order of the Benedictine monks."

Bright tears came into Julia's eyes; she stood silently and then went to the window.

"Your mother," continued the Princess, "your mother is right, quite right. It is a good thing for us that he is gone, this lunatic, who forced his way like an evil spirit into the councils of our hearts and who knew how to lacerate our souls. And the music was the magic with which he ensnared us. I never want to see him again."

The Princess's words were like dagger thrusts to Julia. She reached for her hat and shawl.

"You intend," cried the Princess, "you intend to leave me, my sweet friend? Stay. Stay. Comfort me if you can! An uncanny horror stalks these rooms, this park! For look—" Hedwiga led Julia to the window, pointed to the pavilion where Prince Hektor's adjutant had lived, and began in a somber voice, "Look over there, Julia. Those walls conceal an ominous secret; the steward, the gardeners swear that nobody has lived there since the Prince's departure, that the doors are firmly locked, and yet— Oh, just look over there—just look—don't you see it—at the window?"

Julia actually glimpsed a dark figure at the gable window that vanished immediately.

Julia remarked, as she felt Hedwiga's hand tremble convulsively in hers, that this could not possibly be an ominous secret or ghost, as it was only too likely that one of the servants was using the empty pavilion without permission. The pavilion could be searched right away, and it could be immediately ascertained what the figure was that had been seen at the window; but the Princess assured her that the faithful steward had done that long ago at her request and that he had found no trace of anything human in the whole pavilion.

"Let me tell you," said the Princess, "let me tell you what happened three nights ago! You know that sleep often deserts me and that I get up then and walk around in the room until I succumb to fatigue and really fall asleep. Thus it was that three

nights ago insomnia drove me into this room. Suddenly the reflection of a light trembled on the wall. I looked out of the window and saw four men, one of whom was carrying a dark lantern, disappear near the pavilion; but I could not see if they really went into it. It was not long before the window became light and shadows flitted back and forth. Then it became dark again, but a blinding light that must have come from the opened door of the pavilion shone through the shrubbery. The light came closer and closer until finally a Benedictine monk, who had a torch in his left hand and was carrying a crucifix in his right, stepped out of the bushes. Four men followed him, a bier draped with black cloth on their shoulders. They had only gone a few steps when a figure wrapped in a large cloak stepped up to them. They stopped, put down the bier, the figure removed the cloth, and a corpse became visible. I nearly fainted. I scarcely saw the men pick up the bier and hurry after the monk up the wide side path which leads out of the park to the street toward the Abbey Kanzheim. Since then that figure can be seen at the window, and perhaps it is the ghost of the murdered man that is frightening me."

Julia was inclined to consider the whole occurrence that Hedwiga related a dream or, if she had actually stood wide awake by the window, the deceptive fancy of an excited mind. Who was, who could the dead man be, who was carried out of the pavilion under such mysterious circumstances, since nobody was missing; and who would want to believe that this unknown dead man could haunt the house from which he had been removed? Julia said all this to the Princess and added that those apparitions at the window might be optical illusions, even, perhaps, a joke of the old magician, Meister Abraham, who often played such games and perhaps had given the empty pavilion a ghostly inhabitant.

"How readily," said the Princess, composed again and smiling gently, "how readily one has an explanation if something remarkable, something supernatural occurs! As for the dead man, you have forgotten what happened in the park when Kreisler left us."

"Heavens," cried Julia, "was some dreadful deed then really committed? Who? By whom?"

"You know," Hedwiga continued, "you know, my dear, that Kreisler is alive. But he who loves you also lives. Do not look at me in such alarm! Haven't you guessed long ago what I must tell you, so that you will clearly know what could destroy you if

it were concealed any longer? Prince Hektor loves *you, you,* Julia, with all the wild passion that is peculiar to his race. I was, I am, his fiancée; but you, Julia, are his beloved." The Princess emphasized the last words in a peculiar, sharp way without, however, laying that particular stress on them which is characteristic of a feeling of deep vexation.

"Oh you eternal powers," cried Julia violently as tears gushed from her eyes. "Hedwiga, do you wish to lacerate my heart? What dark spirit speaks from you! No, no! I will gladly suffer you to take revenge on poor me because of the bad dreams that disturb you, but I will never believe in the truth of these ominous phantoms! Hedwiga! Remember, you are no longer the fiancée of that dreadful man who seemed destruction itself to us! He will never return; you will never be his!"

"But I will," replied the Princess, "but I will! Control yourself, girl! Only then, when the Church unites me to the Prince, will the tremendous misunderstanding of life which makes me miserable perhaps be resolved. Providence will save you. We will separate; I to follow my husband, you to remain." The Princess became silent from inner emotion. Julia was also incapable of words, and they fell into each other's arms in tears.

Tea was announced. Julia was in more agitation than her thoughtful quiet spirit seemed capable of. She found it impossible to join the gathering, and her mother gladly allowed her to go home, as the Princess also wanted to rest.

Fräulein Nannette assured the Fürstin, who inquired, that the Princess had felt very well that afternoon and evening but had insisted on being alone with Julia. As far as she could observe from the neighboring room, the Princess and Julia had chattered a great deal and had amused themselves, now laughing, now weeping.

"The dear girls," said the Court Chamberlain softly.

"The amiable Princess, the dear girl!" corrected the Fürst, glaring at the Court Chamberlain. Appalled at his dreadful error, he tried to swallow a rather large piece of zwieback that he had dunked in his tea, but it stuck in his throat and he began to cough so frightfully that he had to leave the room quickly and was only saved from miserably choking to death by the Court Quarter-Master-Sergeant in the hall, who performed a well-placed drum solo on his back.

Having been guilty of two indiscretions, the Court Chamberlain was afraid of committing a third, and so he did not dare return to the drawing room but sent his apologies to the Fürst, claiming a sudden illness.

The whist game usually played by the Fürst was disrupted by the Court Chamberlain's absence. When, therefore, the gaming tables were set up, everyone waited expectantly to see what the Fürst would do in this critical situation. He did nothing, however, after the others had sat down at his signal to play. He took Rätin Benzon by the hand, led her to the sofa, and bade her sit, while he himself sat down beside her.

"I would not," he then said, speaking gently and softly as he always did to Benzon, "I would not have liked it if the Court Chamberlain had choked to death on the zwieback. But he seemed to be very absentminded, as I have often noticed, since he called the Princess Hedwiga a girl, and he therefore would have played whist badly. Anyway, dear Benzon, I am glad instead of playing to be able to exchange a few words with you in private as we used to. Ah —as we used to! Well, you know my attachment for you, dear lady! It will never cease; a royal heart is always a loyal one as long as pressing affairs do not direct it otherwise."

With these words the Fürst kissed Benzon's hand more tenderly than rank, age, and surroundings would seem to permit. Benzon assured him, her eyes sparkling with joy, that she had been longing for the moment when she could speak confidentially with the Fürst, as she had so much to tell that would not be unpleasant.

"You must know," said Benzon, "you must know, Your Grace, that the Councillor for Foreign Affairs has just written that our business has suddenly taken a favorable turn, that—"

"Silence," the Fürst interrupted her, "silence, dear lady, do not talk of governmental affairs! Even the Fürst wears a nightshirt and nightcap when, almost crushed by the burden of governing, he betakes himself to rest, although Frederick the Great, to be sure, was an exception, which you as a well-read woman would know, as he always wore a felt hat in bed. Well, I think that the Fürst also has too much of that in him which—well, which, as the people say, is the basis of the so-called bourgeois life (marriage, paternal joys, etc.) to cast off these feelings completely; and it is at least excusable if he abandons himself to them at times when affairs of state

and concern for the proper behavior at court and in the country do not lay claim to his entire person. Dear Benzon! These are such moments. Seven signed papers are lying finished in my study, and now let me forget the ruler entirely; let me be nothing but a father of the household at tea, the *German Father of the Family* by Freiherr von Gemmingen.[51] Let me speak of my—yes of my children, who cause me such concern that I often become unsuitably upset."

"The conversation," said Benzon in a sharp tone, "the conversation should be about your children, Your Grace? That means about Prince Ignatius and Princess Hedwiga! Speak, Your Grace, speak! Perhaps I can offer you advice and comfort as does Meister Abraham."

"Yes," continued the Fürst, "yes, advice and comfort—that I often need. Look, my dear Benzon, in regard to the Prince, he does not need the special gifts of the mind which nature usually gives those who would otherwise remain obscure and without feeling because of their lack of rank; but a little more esprit would be desirable! He is and always will be a simpleton. Look, there he sits and dangles his legs and plays one false card after another and giggles and laughs like a boy of seven! Benzon!—*entre nous soit dit*—he cannot even be taught the art of writing to the extent that he needs it; his royal name looks like an owl's claw. Mercy! What will come of that! Recently I was disturbed at my work by a horrible noise near my window; I looked out to get someone to chase the disagreeable spitz away, and what do I see! Would you believe it, dear lady, it is the Prince who is jumping after the gardener's boy and barking like mad! They are playing hare and hound together! Is there any sense in that at all? Are those royal emotions? Can the Prince ever attain the least independence?"

"Therefore," replied Benzon, "therefore it is necessary for the Prince to be married immediately and to get a consort whose gaiety, charm, and clear intelligence would waken his dormant mind and who is good-natured enough to bend down to him and to raise him gradually to her level. These characteristics are indispensable to the female who is to belong to the Prince if he is to be saved from that state of mind which—I say this with pain, Your Grace—can

51. Otto Heinrich Freiherr von Gemmingen (1755–1836), *Der teutsche Hausvater* (1780), adapted from Diderot's *Père de famille,* one of the earliest bourgeois plays in Germany. It was produced in Berlin in 1807. Hoffmann was in Berlin at that time.

degenerate into real insanity. Therefore, these rare qualities should be considered, and rank should not be weighed too strictly."

"Never," said the Fürst, wrinkling his forehead, "never have there been misalliances in our house. Abandon this idea that I cannot approve. I always was and am prepared to grant any other wishes!"

"I am not," replied Benzon sharply, "I am not aware of that, Your Grace! How often have wishes had to yield to imaginary considerations. But there are considerations that defy all events."

"Laissons cela," the Fürst interrupted Benzon, while he cleared his throat and took some snuff. After several moments of silence he continued. "The Princess causes me even more concern than the Prince. Tell me, Benzon, how could such a daughter, with this strange temperament, with this unusual morbidity which baffles even the doctor, have been born to us? Has the Fürstin not always rejoiced in glowing health? Has she ever been inclined to mystical attacks of nerves? Am I not myself in body and mind a robust Fürst? How did we happen to have a child that, I must confess to my bitter sorrow, often seems to me to be quite—insane, lacking any royal decorum?"

"I, too," replied Benzon, "I, too, cannot comprehend the Princess's organism. Her mother has always been clear, intelligent, free of any violent, destructive passions." Benzon uttered the last words somberly and softly, casting down her eyes.

"Do you mean the Fürstin?" the Fürst asked, with an emphasis as if it did not seem proper to him that the word Fürstin had not been added to mother.

"Whom else," replied Benzon tensely, "whom else should I mean?"

"Did not," continued the Fürst, "did not the last dreadful attack of the Princess ruin my endeavors and my pleasure in her imminent engagement that I had desired? For, dear Benzon, *entre nous soit dit,* the Princess's sudden catalepsy, which I ascribe merely to a severe cold, was probably the cause of Prince Hektor's sudden departure. He wants to break it off, and—*juste ciel!* I must confess, I really cannot blame him, so that even if etiquette did not forbid me any further communication with him, this would prevent me, the Fürst, from taking a step towards the fulfillment of a wish, which I only unwillingly and not of necessity abandon. You

will agree with me, my dear lady, that it is always a bit worrying to have a wife who is subject to such strange attacks. Could not such a royal and cataleptic consort be seized by an attack while holding court and then stand there like an automaton and force all the worthy people present to copy her and stand motionless? It is true that one could imagine that a court suddenly seized with catalepsy would be the most solemn and sublime one in the world, since the slightest violation of the proper dignity would be impossible for even the most frivolous. But a feeling that comes to me in such family moments as the present tells me that such a condition in the bride can arouse a chilling horror in the bridegroom, and therefore —Benzon, you are a kindly, understanding woman; if you could perhaps find a way of straightening out this matter with the Prince, some means—"

"There is no need," Benzon interrupted the Fürst warmly, "there is no need, Your Grace! It was not the Princess's illness that drove the Prince away so quickly; another secret is involved here, and the Kapellmeister Kreisler is entangled in this secret."

"What," cried the Fürst astonished, "what did you say, Benzon? The Kapellmeister Kreisler? So it is true that he—"

"Yes," continued the Rätin, "yes, Your Grace, it was dissension between him and Prince Hektor, which was to have been settled in perhaps too heroic a way, which sent the Prince away."

"Dissension," the Fürst interrupted Benzon, "dissension—settled—heroic way!—the shot in the park—the bloody hat! Benzon! But it is impossible—the Prince—the Kapellmeister!—a duel —a *rencontre;* both are unthinkable!"

"So much," continued Benzon, "so much, Your Grace, is certain—that Kreisler had too powerful an effect on the Princess's soul and that the strange fear, even horror, that she first felt in Kreisler's presence was transforming itself into a destructive passion. It is possible that the Prince saw clearly enough that he had a rival in Kreisler who, from the beginning, confronted him with hostile, mocking irony and whom he believed he must get out of the way; and that this engendered a deed which only the bloody hate of offended honor and jealousy may excuse and which, thanks to the heavenly powers, did not succeed. I confess that all this does not explain the Prince's sudden departure and that, as I have said, another dark secret still exists. The Prince fled, as Julia told me, horrified by a picture that Kreisler carried with him and showed

to the Prince. Well, whatever the reason, Kreisler is gone and the Princess's crisis is over! Believe me, Your Grace, if Kreisler had remained, the most violent passion for him would have flamed up in the Princess's breast, and she would rather have died than have given her hand to the Prince. But everything has changed now; Prince Hektor is returning shortly, and his marriage with the Princess will end all our worries."

"Look," cried the Fürst angrily. "Look, Benzon, at the insolence of the vile musician! The Princess wishes to fall in love with him, wishes to reject the suit of the amiable Prince! Ah, *le coquin!* For the first time I understand you thoroughly, Meister Abraham! You must get that dreadful man off my neck and see to it that he never returns."

"Any measure," said the Rätin, "any measure that Meister Abraham might suggest would be superfluous, since what is necessary has already been done. Kreisler is at the Abbey Kanzheim and, as the Abbot Chrysostomus has written me, will probably decide to renounce the world and enter the order. The Princess has already learned this from me at a propitious moment; and as I did not notice any special emotional reaction in the Princess, I feel sure that the ominous crisis, as I said, is already past."

"Remarkable," said the Fürst, "remarkable, dear woman! What an attachment to me and my children you have shown! How you concern yourself for the well-being of my house!"

"Really," Benzon said bitterly, "really? Do I do that? *Could* I, *might* I always concern myself for the well-being of your children?"

Benzon placed a special emphasis on the last words; the Fürst stared silently at the floor and played with the thumbs of his folded hands. Finally he murmured softly, "Angela! Still no trace? Completely vanished?"

"It is so," replied Benzon, "and I fear that the unfortunate child has become the victim of some shameful act. She was supposedly seen in Venice, but that is certainly a mistake. Confess, Your Grace, it was cruel—horrible, that you had your child torn from its mother's breast and sent into unhappy exile! This wound, occasioned by your severity, will never cease to pain me."

"Benzon," said the Fürst, "did I not settle a considerable income on you and the child? Could I do more? If Angela had stayed with us, would I not have had to fear that any moment our frailty might be betrayed and the serenity of the court disturbed in a

very unpleasant way? You know the Fürstin, my dear Benzon! You know that she often has peculiar whims."

"And so," said Benzon, "and so, an annual income was supposed to compensate the mother for all the pain, all the sorrow, all the bitter mourning for the lost child? Truly, Your Grace, there are other ways of caring for one's child which satisfies its mother better than all the gold there is!"

Benzon spoke these words with an expression and in a tone that embarrassed the Fürst.

"Excellent lady," he began, disconcerted, "why these strange thoughts? Do you not believe that the complete disappearance of our dear Angela is very unpleasant, very annoying to me? She must have become a dear, lovely girl, since she was born of such charming, handsome parents."

Again the Fürst kissed Benzon's hand tenderly, but she quickly drew it away and whispered in the Fürst's ear, "Confess, Your Grace, you were unjust, cruel when you insisted that the child had to be removed. Is it not your duty not to refuse the wish, the fulfillment of which I would generously regard as some compensation for all my sorrow?"

"Benzon," replied the Fürst, more subdued than before, "dear, wonderful Benzon, can our Angela not be found again? I will perform heroic deeds for you, dear lady! I will confide in Meister Abraham, consult with him. He is a sensible, experienced man; perhaps he can help."

"Oh," Benzon interrupted the Fürst. "Oh, as to that wise Meister Abraham! Do you believe, Your Grace, that Meister Abraham is really inclined to undertake something for you, that he is loyally attached to your house? And how can he be in a position to find out something about Angela's fate, after all inquiries in Venice and in Florence have been vain, and what is worse, after that mysterious method which he used to investigate the unknown has been stolen from him."

"You mean," said the Fürst, "you mean his wife, the evil enchantress, Chiara."

"It is," replied Benzon, "it is very questionable whether this woman, who was perhaps only inspired and gifted with wonderful powers, deserves this name. In any event it was unjust, inhuman, to rob the Meister of his beloved being, to whom he was attached with his whole soul, who was a part of his very self."

"Benzon," cried the Fürst alarmed, "Benzon, I do not under-

stand you today! My head is spinning! Were you not yourself agreed that the menacing creature, by dint of whom the Meister could have soon been able to control all our affairs, had to be removed? Did you not approve my letter to the Grand Duke in which I indicated that, since sorcery has long been forbidden in the country, people who traffic in this should not be tolerated and for safety's sake should be locked up for a bit? Was it not done out of sheer consideration for Meister Abraham that the mysterious Chiara was not given an open trial but was seized in all quiet and taken away, where I do not even know, since I did not concern myself any more about that? What reproach can touch me here?"

"Pardon me," replied Benzon, "pardon me, Your Grace. There is at least the reproach of acting too hastily which could in justice touch you. But— You must know, Your Grace! Meister Abraham is informed that his Chiara was removed at your instigation. He is quiet, he is friendly; but do you not believe, Your Grace, that hate and revenge dwell in his heart against the man who robbed him of what was dearest to him on earth? And you intend to confide in this man, intend to reveal your soul to him?"

"Benzon," said the Fürst, as he wiped beads of perspiration from his forehead, "Benzon! You are aging me—I might say indescribably so! Merciful heavens! Can a Fürst be so discountenanced? Damn it— Lord, I believe I am swearing at tea like a dragoon! Benzon! Why didn't you speak sooner! He already knows everything! In the fisherman hut, when I was beside myself at the Princess's condition, my mouth, my heart overflowed. I spoke about Angela, revealed to him— Benson, it is terrible! *J'étois un* —donkey! *Voila tout!*"

"And he replied?" asked Benzon anxiously.

"It almost," continued the Fürst, "it almost seems to me that Meister Abraham was the first one to begin speaking about our former attachment and how I could have been a happy father instead of a miserable one. But so much is correct, that when I had finished my confession, he declared with a smile that he had long known everything and hoped that perhaps it would soon be known where Angela was. Many delusions would then be destroyed, much confusion resolved."

"That," said Benzon with trembling lips, "that is what the Meister said?"

"Sur mon honneur," replied the Fürst, "he said that. A thou-

sand *sapperment*—pardon me, Benzon, but I am angry. What if the old man should bear a grudge against me? Benzon, *que faire?*"

Both the Fürst and Benzon stared at each other speechless. "Your Serene Highness," whispered a flunkey softly as he offered the Fürst some tea. "*Bête!*" screamed the Fürst, knocking the proffered cup out of the flunkey's hand as he leaped to his feet. Everyone rose in horror from the card tables; the game was over; the Fürst, controlling himself with effort, smiled a friendly "*adieu*" to the frightened people and retired to the inner chambers with the Fürstin. On each face could be clearly read, "Lord, what is it, what does it mean? The Fürst didn't play but talked so long and so importantly with the Rätin and then became so frightfully angry!"

Benzon could not even remotely guess what kind of a scene was awaiting her in her dwelling, which was situated in an annex close to the palace. She had scarcely entered when Julia rushed to her quite beside herself and— But the present biographer is happy that he can relate more clearly what happened to Julia during the royal tea, that he has been able to tell many other facts of this somewhat confused story! So! We know that Julia was allowed to go home early. A game-keeper lighted the way with a torch. They had scarcely gone several steps from the palace when the game-keeper suddenly stopped and raised his torch.

"What is it?" asked Julia.

"Well," replied the game-keeper, "well, Fräulein Julia, did you notice the figure which was hurrying ahead of us so quickly? I don't know what I should think; someone has been sneaking around here for several evenings and being so secretive is probably planning something wicked. We have tried all kinds of ways to catch him, but he always slips through our fingers, even becoming invisible before our eyes like a ghost or like the devil himself."

Julia recalled the apparition in the attic window of the pavilion and trembled with an uneasy fear. "Away, quick, away!" she cried to the game-keeper, who merely laughed and said Fräulein Julia had no need to fear, because before anything could happen to her, the ghost would have to twist his neck, besides which the unknown thing that had appeared near the palace probably had flesh and bone like other decent people and was a fearful, furtive rabbit.

Julia dismissed her maid, who complained of a headache and fever, and put on her night clothes without assistance.

When she was alone in her room, she again thought about

everything that Hedwiga had discussed with her in a state that she could only ascribe to neurotic tension. And yet it was clear that the neurotic tension could only have a psychic basis. Girls like Julia, with simple, naïve minds, rarely guess correctly in such intricate cases. Thus Julia also believed, when she had reviewed everything, that Hedwiga was seized by that terrible passion which she herself had described as so fearful when she first surmised it and that Prince Hektor was the man to whom she had sacrificed her own soul. Then, she also decided, the delusion had come to Hedwiga, how she did not know, that the Prince was ensnared in some other love; and this had tormented her like a fearful demon that was relentlessly pursuing her, so that her mind had become terribly deranged. "Oh," said Julia to herself, "oh, you dear, good Hedwiga, if Prince Hektor came back, you would soon be convinced that you have nothing to fear from your friend!" But in the same moment that Julia uttered these words, the thought that the Prince loved her came to her so strongly that she was frightened by its power and vividness and felt an inexpressible fear that the Princess's belief could be true and could certainly be her destruction. That strange, unfamiliar impression which the Prince's expression, his whole person had made on her, came to her again, and she trembled with horror. She recalled that moment on the bridge when the Prince, his arm around her, had fed the swan, and all the artful words which he had uttered at that time and which, however inoffensive they had seemed to her then, now seemed to her to have a deeper meaning. But she also thought of the portentous dream, when she had felt herself firmly clasped by iron arms, and that it had been the Prince who had held her; but when she had then awakened, she had seen the Kapellmeister in the garden and his whole being had become clear to her and she had believed that he would protect her from the Prince.

"No," cried Julia aloud, "no, it is not so, it cannot be, it is not possible. It is the evil spirit of hell itself which stirs up these sinful doubts in poor me! No, it shall not have power over me!"

With the thought of the Prince and of those dangerous moments, there stirred in Julia's breast a feeling which could be recognized as menacing because it awakened in her a sense of shame that sent blood to her cheeks and hot tears to her eyes. It was lucky for sweet, naïve Julia that she possessed strength enough to subdue the evil spirit, to allow it no hold to which it could cling.

It must be stated here again that Prince Hektor was the most handsome and charming man there was, that his skill in pleasing was based on a deep knowledge of woman that he had acquired from a lifetime of successful adventures, and that a simple, young girl might well be frightened by the triumphant power of his glance, of his entire being.

"Oh Johannes," she said gently, "you good, marvelous man. Can I not seek the protection from you which you promised me? Can you not speak comfortingly to me with those divine sounds which echo in my breast?"

Julia opened the piano and began to play and to sing the compositions of Kreisler that were her favorites. Soon she really did feel comforted, cheered; singing carried her away to another world where there were no princes, even no Hedwiga with morbid notions to disturb her.

"Now my best beloved canzonette!" said Julia, and began the song that so many composers have set to music, *"Mi lagnero tacendo,* etc."[52] Actually, this was Kreisler's most successful song. The sweet pain of fervid desire was expressed in a simple melody with a truth and power that irresistibly gripped all sensitive souls. Julia finished. Quite lost in thoughts of Kreisler, she played a few chords which seemed an echo of her inner feelings. Then the door opened; she looked up, and before she could rise from her chair, Prince Hektor lay at her feet and grasped both her hands firmly. She cried out loudly from the sudden fright, but the prince implored her by the Virgin and all the Saints to be quiet and to grant him only two minutes of the heaven of her glance, of her speech. With expressions which only the frenzy of the most violent passion can inspire, he said to her that he adored only her, only her, that the thought of marriage with Hedwiga was frightful, was killing. That he had therefore intended to flee, but driven by the power of a passion that could only end with his death, he had soon returned to see Julia, to speak with her, to tell her that she alone was his life, his all!

"Away," cried Julia in hopeless anguish. "Away—you will kill me, Prince!"

"Never!" cried the Prince, pressing Julia's hands to his lips in a frenzy of passion. "Never! The moment has come which will grant me life or death. Julia! Heavenly child! Can you reject me,

52. See chap. 1, note 10.

can you reject the one whose whole being and bliss you are! No, you love me, Julia, I know you do; so say that you love me and all the heavens of boundless rapture are opened to me!"

The Prince embraced Julia, who was half unconscious from horror and fear, and pressed her violently to his breast.

"Woe to me," she cried, half-choking, "woe to me—will no one take pity on me?"

Then the light of torches illuminated the windows and several voices could be heard outside the door. Julia felt a glowing kiss burn her lips, and the Prince fled quickly.

So, quite beside herself, as mentioned above, Julia rushed toward her mother, who learned with horror what had happened. She began to comfort Julia as best she could, to assure her that she would drag the Prince from his hiding place to his shame.

"Oh," said Julia, "oh, don't do that, mother. I would die if the Fürst, if Hedwiga should find out—" She fell in her mother's arms, sobbing, hiding her face.

"You are right," replied the Rätin, "you are right, my dear, good child; nobody must suspect right now that the Prince is here, that he is pursuing you, you dear, naïve Julia! Those in the plot will be silent. For there is not the slightest doubt that there are some who are in union with the Prince, since he could not otherwise have stayed so long in Sieghartshof without being noticed, nor could he have slipped into our dwelling. It is incomprehensible to me how the Prince could have escaped from the house without having met me and Friedrich, who was lighting my way. We found old George in a deep, unnatural sleep; but where is Nanny?"

"Alas," murmured Julia, "alas, she was sick, and I had to send her away."

"Perhaps," said Benzon, "perhaps I can be her doctor," and suddenly pushed open the door of the next room. There stood Nanny, fully dressed; she had been eavesdropping and collapsed at Benzon's feet in fear and terror.

Benzon only needed to ask a few questions to find out that the Prince, through the ancient, supposedly trustworthy steward—

(M.c.)—did I learn! Muzius, my true friend, my beloved brother had expired as a result of the severe wound on his hindleg. The sad news hit me very hard; for the first time I realized what Muzius had been to me! The funeral was to be held, as Puff told

me, in the coming night in the cellar of the same house where my master lived and where the body had been brought. I promised not only to come at the proper time, but also to arrange for food and drink, so that the funeral feast could be held according to the good, old customs. I really did arrange all this, gradually carrying down my plentiful supplies of fish, chicken bones, and vegetables. For readers who like to have everything explained precisely, and who therefore probably want to know how I managed to carry drinks down, I will state that a friendly servant girl helped me. The servant girl, whom I frequently met in the cellar and also used to visit in her kitchen, seemed to like my race, and me especially, so that we never saw each other without playing with each other in a charming way. She handed me many snacks, which were actually less good than those I received from my master, which I nevertheless consumed, pretending out of pure gallantry that they were especially delicious. That no doubt will always touch the heart of a servant girl, and so she did what I wanted. I jumped in her lap and she scratched my ears and head so lovingly that I was in rapture and bliss and felt at ease with the hand "which weekdays guides a broom and Sundays then caresses best."[53] I addressed myself now to this friendly person just as she was about to carry a large pot of sweet milk from the cellar where I was and expressed to her in an understandable way my strong desire to keep the milk for myself. "Foolish Murr," said the girl, who knew my name just as well as did the other people in the house and in the whole neighborhood. "Foolish Murr, you certainly don't intend to keep the milk for yourself; you intend to treat your friends with it. Well, keep the milk, little grey-jacket; I must work upstairs for others." She put the pot of milk on the ground again, stroked my back a little, while I expressed my thanks and pleasure with most elegant somersaults, and then went up the cellar stairs. Mark, O cats, that the acquaintance, even a certain sentimental, comfortable relationship with a friendly cook, is useful for young people of our class and race.

At midnight I went down to the cellar. A sad, heart-rending sight! There lay the body of my dear, beloved friend on the center of a catafalque, which, it is true, in keeping with the simple tastes which had always been a part of the deceased, consisted of only a bundle of straw. All the tomcats were already assembled; we pressed paws, incapable of words, sat down with hot tears in our

53. Freely adapted from Goethe's *Faust I*, "Vor dem Tor."

eyes in a circle around the catafalque, and began a dirge, whose sound, tearing the heart strings, echoed fearfully through the cellar. It was the most mournful, horrible lament that has ever been heard; no human organ can produce the sound.

After the singing had ended, a handsome youth, decently dressed in black and white, stood at the head end of the corpse and made the following speech, which he later gave me in writing, although he had spoken extemporaneously.

FUNERAL ORATION

held at the grave of the tomcat Muzius who expired too soon.
Stud. of Hist. and Phil.
by his true friend and brother
Kater Hinzmann
Stud. of Poes. and Rhet.

Dear brothers, united in sorrow!
Brave and noble *Bursche!*

What is the tomcat! A fragile, transitory object, like everything else born on earth! If it is true, as the most famous doctors and physiologists claim, that death, to which all creatures are subject, consists chiefly in the complete cessation of all breathing, then is our trusty friend, our valiant brother, this loyal, brave comrade of joy and sorrow, then is our noble Muzius indeed dead! See, there lies the noble cat on the cold straw, his four legs stretched out stiff! Not the slightest breath steals across the eternally closed lips! The eyes that once glowed, sometimes with a gentle amorous fire, and sometimes glistened an angry greenish gold, are sunken! A deathly pallor is on his visage; his ears hang limp; his tail hangs down! Oh brother Muzius, where are your lusty leaps, where your gaiety, your good humor, your clear, happy meow which made all hearts rejoice, your courage, your reliability, your cleverness, your wit?[54] Bitter death has robbed you of everything, and you do not even know, perhaps, whether you ever lived. And yet you were health and strength itself, armed against all bodily miseries as if you were to live forever? No little wheel of the clockworks that made you tick was ever defective, and the Angel of Death did not swing his sword above your head because the works were run down and could not be wound up again. No, a hostile principle violently

54. A parody of Hamlet's graveside speech, V, 1, 73ff.

attacked your organism and wantonly destroyed it, although it could have lasted for a long time. Yes—these eyes might have long gleamed with friendliness; merry ideas, happy songs might long have flowed from these lips, from this rigid breast; this tail might long have curled in wavy lines, proclaiming the inner power of a happy soul; these paws might long have proved their strength and skill in the mighty, daring leaps—and now— Oh, can nature permit that which she has with effort made to last a long time to be destroyed prematurely, or is there really a dark spirit called chance which with despotic, wanton caprice may interfere with the oscillations which seem to determine all being in accordance with the eternal principles of nature? Oh dead cat, could you but tell the sorrowing but living gathering here! But, worthy gentlemen, valiant brothers, let us not pursue such pensive reflections, but address ourselves solely to mourning our friend Muzius, whom we lost far too early. It is customary that the funeral orator present the gathering with a complete biography along with laudatory comments and other remarks, and this custom is very good, since such a boring lecture will arouse nausea in even the most unhappy listener. According to the experience and assertions of established psychologists, nausea best destroys sadness; thus the orator can fulfill two obligations simultaneously, showing due honor to the deceased and giving comfort to the survivors. There are examples, and they are natural, that the most downcast person, after such an oration, has departed quite happy and cheerful; the joy at being released from the misery of the speech has consoled him for the loss of the departed. Dear, assembled brethren! How gladly I would follow the old established custom, how gladly I would present to you the entire lengthy biography of our deceased friend and brother and change you from saddened to gladdened cats; but I cannot, truly I cannot. You will agree, dearly beloved brethren, when I tell you that I know almost nothing at all about the actual life of the deceased, of his birth, education, and later life, that I would have to serve you up nothing but fables; but the place here, by the side of the deceased, is much too serious and our mood too solemn for that. No offense, *Bursche*, but instead of a long, boring sermon, I merely wish to tell you in a few simple words what kind of an ignominious end this poor devil suffered who lies here stiff and dead and what kind of a gallant, fine fellow he was in life! But, heavens! I have abandoned the tone of persuasion, although I am

an expert at it and, if fate so desires, hope to become a Professor *poeseos et eloquentiae.*[55]

(Hinzmann became silent, washed his ears, forehead, nose, and whiskers with his right paw, stared for a long time at the corpse, cleared his throat, and then continued in an exalted voice.)

Oh bitter fate! Oh cruel death! Was it necessary so cruelly to snatch away the deceased youth in the prime of his life? Brethren! An orator may repeat to his audience what they are already bored with hearing; therefore, I repeat what you all know already; namely, that our departed brother fell a victim to the insane rage of the philistines, the spitzes. He was about to creep up to that roof where we used to enjoy ourselves in peace and joy, where happy songs echoed, where paw in paw and breast to breast we were one heart and soul; it was there in the quiet solitude he wished to celebrate with Senior Puff the memory of those beautiful days, true days in Aranjuez, which are now past.[56] The philistine spitzes, who intended to thwart in every way any renewal of our happy cat society, had placed traps in the dark corners of the attic. The unfortunate Muzius was caught in one of these, his hindleg was crushed, and—he had to die! Painful and dangerous are the wounds the philistines inflict, for they always use dull, jagged weapons. But, by nature strong and healthy, the departed could have recovered in spite of the dangerous injury; but the grief, the deep grief, at having been defeated by vile spitzes, and his splendid career destroyed, the constant thought of the disgrace which we had suffered—this it was that gnawed at his life. He would not tolerate a proper dressing, took no medicine-- It is said that he wanted to die!"[57]

(I, we, everyone could not keep from expressing our bitter sorrow at these words of Hinzmann, and we all broke out in such a pitiful howling and wailing that a rock would have been moved. When we had calmed down a bit so that we could hear, Hinzmann continued with pathos.)

Oh Muzius! Look down on us! See the tears which we shed for you, listen to the sad complaints that we raise for you, departed cat! Yes, look down on us or up at us, whichever you are able to do; be with us in spirit, if you still have a spirit and have not already

55. Kater Hinzmann's Latin is on a par with his speech.
56. See the opening lines of Schiller's *Don Carlos.*
57. Parody of Schiller's *Wallensteins Tod,* IV, x, 6830.

expended the one you possessed at another time! Brethren! As I have indicated, I will keep my mouth shut about the biography of the deceased, because I do not know anything about it; but all the more vivid in my mind are the superior qualities of the late-lamented, and these I will shove under your noses, my dearest, beloved friends, so that you may feel the full extent of the terrible loss which you have suffered through the death of this wonderful cat! Hearken, young cats who are inclined never to stray from the path of virtue, hearken! Muzius was what few in life are, a worthy member of the cat society, a good, faithful husband, an excellent and loving father, a zealous champion of truth and justice, an indefatigable benefactor, the support of the poor, a true friend in need! A worthy member of cat society? Yes, for he always uttered the best sentiments and was even prepared for some sacrifices when things went as he wished and was only hostile to those who contradicted him and did not submit to his will. A good and faithful husband? Yes!—because he only chased other little cats when they were younger and lovelier than his wife and irresistible desire drove him to it. A kind and loving father? Yes!—because nobody ever heard that he was overcome by an attack of unusual hunger and ate one of his own babies as the coarse, hard-hearted fathers of our race are in the habit of doing. Rather, he was glad when the mother carried them all away and he never heard anything more about them. A zealous champion of truth and justice? Yes!—for he would have given his life for them, but since one only lives once, he did not bother much about them, a fact which cannot be held against him. An indefatigable benefactor, the support of the poor? Yes!—for every year on New Year's Day he would bring a little herring tail or some tiny bones down to the yard for his poor brothers who needed food; since he had fulfilled his duty in this way as a worthy cat friend, he would growl crossly at those needy cats who wanted more than that from him. A true friend in need? Yes!—because if he became needy, he did not abandon even those friends whom he had previously neglected and forgotten. Immortal one! What can I say about your heroic courage, about your refined feeling for everything beautiful and noble, of your scholarship, of your culture, of all the thousand virtues which were united in you! What, I repeat, can I say about them without increasing our just pain at your sorrowful departure! Friends, mourning brethren! Let us take an example from the deceased, let us exert all our efforts

to tread in his worthy footsteps, let us be completely like the departed, and we too will enjoy in death the peace of the truly wise cat that is purified by virtues of every kind and category, as this deceased was! Just see how quietly he lies there, how not a paw stirs, how all my praise of his excellent qualities could not extract from him the slightest smile of pleasure! Do you think, grieving cats, that the severest criticism, the rudest, most insulting slanders would not have had the same effect on the deceased? Do you think that even the demonic philistine spitz, whose eyes he would have scratched out, if he came here now would enrage him or disturb his gentle, sweet peace?

Our wonderful Muzius is beyond all praise and slander, beyond all enmity, all teasing, all silly mockery, all wild mischief; he has no charming smile, no fiery embrace, no trusty paw-shake more for the friend, but also no claws, no teeth any more for the enemy! Thanks to his virtues, he has achieved the peace for which he strove in vain in life! Of course, it does seem to me that all of us who are sitting here and howling for our friend would achieve *that* peace without having to be such paragons of virtue as he and that there must be some other motive for being virtuous than just the longing for this peace; however, that is one of those thoughts which I will postpone for further consideration. I was just about to impress on you to devote your whole life primarily to learning to die as beautifully as friend Muzius, but I would rather not do it, since you could offer all kinds of criticisms. I mean, namely, that you could reply that the deceased ought to have learned to be careful and to avoid traps so as not to die prematurely. And then it also occurs to me that a very young cat, when his teacher admonished him that the cat must spend his whole life learning to die, saucily replied that it could not be so very difficult since everyone succeeded in doing it the first time! Let us now, saddened youths, dedicate a few minutes to silent meditation.

(Hinzmann was silent and washed his ears and face again with his paw; then he seemed to become absorbed in his thoughts and shut his eyes tight. Finally, when too much time had elapsed, Senior Puff poked him and said softly, "Hinzmann, I do believe you have fallen asleep. Hurry up and finish your sermon, for we are all feeling terribly hungry." Hinzmann started up, sat down again in the charming attitude of an orator, and continued.)

Beloved brethren! I had hoped to get around to several sub-

lime thoughts and to close this oration spectacularly, but I cannot think of anything. I think the great pain which I have striven to feel has made me a little stupid. Let us, therefore, consider my speech concluded—for which you cannot deny tremendous applause—and now sing the customary *de* or *ex profundis.*

Thus the charming cat finished his eulogy, which seemed to me from the rhetorical standpoint to be well ordered and effective, but in which I found much to criticize. It seemed to me that Hinzmann had talked more to show off a glittering oratorical talent than to show honor to poor Muzius after his sad departure. Everything that he said did not really apply to friend Muzius, who was a simple, modest, upright cat and, I had found out, a loyal, good-natured soul. Besides, the praise that Hinzmann bestowed was ambiguous, so that the oration later actually displeased me, and I was only infected during the speech by the charm of the speaker and his expressive declamation. Senior Puff also seemed to be of my opinion; we exchanged glances which showed our agreement about Hinzmann's speech.

Following the suggestion in the conclusion of the speech, we sang a *de profundis,* which sounded, if possible, even more mournful, even more heart-breaking, than the dreadful grave song sung before the speech. It is well known that singers of our race can express the deepest sorrow, the saddest misery, whether the lamentation is for a love scorned or for a loved one who has passed away, so well that even the cold, unfeeling person is shaken by songs of this kind and can only relieve his feelings by strange curses. When the *de profundis* was ended, we lifted up the body of our deceased brother and lowered it into a deep grave that was in the corner of the cellar.

At that moment there occurred the most unexpected and the most touching part of the whole funeral. Three girl kittens, lovely as the day, tripped in and scattered potato tops and parsley that they had picked in the cellar into the open grave, while an older cat sang a simple and charming song. The melody was familiar to me; if I am not mistaken, the original words of the song, for which others had been substituted, began with "O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree!" etc. Senior Puff whispered to me that these were the daughters of the deceased Muzius who were honoring their father's funeral in this manner.

I could not keep my eyes off the singer. She was charming; the sound of her sweet voice, even the pathos, the deep emotion in the melody of the dirge, quite carried me away; I could not restrain my tears. But the pain that she squeezed out of me was of a very strange kind, since it aroused in me the sweetest pleasure.

I must come right out with it! My whole heart was inclined toward the singer. It seemed to me that I had never seen a young lady cat with this charm and nobility in deportment and appearance, with this overwhelming beauty.

The grave was filled by the efforts of four vigorous cats who scratched together as much sand and earth as possible. The interment was over and we went to dinner. Muzius's pretty, charming daughters were about to retire, but we did not allow that; rather they had to partake of the funeral feast, and I was clever enough to arrange it so that I escorted the most beautiful one to dinner and sat down right next to her. If it was her beauty that had first dazzled me and her sweet voice that had enchanted me, now it was her bright, lucid intelligence, the sincerity, the tenderness of her feelings, the completely feminine nature that radiated from her soul which transported me into divine raptures. Everything acquired a special enchantment on her lips; her conversation was a charming, tender idyll. Thus she spoke, for example, with warmth about a milk porridge that she had enjoyed with a good appetite a few days before her father's death. And when I said that such a porridge was prepared most excellently at my master's with a large lump of butter, she looked at me with her naïve, shining green eyes and asked in a tone that made me tremble, "Oh really—really, sir? You too love milk porridge? With butter!" she murmured as if absorbed in an ecstatic reverie. Who does not know that nothing better suits sweet, blooming girls of six or eight months (she was about that old) than a touch of reverie; they are then quite irresistible. And so I became inflamed with passion, fervently pressed the lovely cat's paw, and cried aloud, "Angelic child! If you will breakfast with me on milk porridge, there is no greater bliss for which I would exchange my good fortune!" She seemed embarrassed, cast down her eyes, blushed, but left her paw in mine, which aroused my highest hopes. For I had once heard an old gentleman, who, if I am not mistaken, was a lawyer, say at my master's that it was very dangerous for a young girl to leave her hand for any length of time in that of a gentleman, because he would rightly consider

it for a *traditio brevi manu*[58] of her whole person and would make all kinds of assumptions, which she would be able to reject only with great difficulty. I had a very great desire to make such claims and was about to begin when the conversation was interrupted by a libation in honor of the departed. The three younger daughters of the deceased Muzius had meanwhile been playing with a gaiety and a teasing innocence which enchanted all the cats. The food and drink had already noticeably erased a good deal of the sorrow and pain; the whole party was becoming gayer and livelier. There was laughter and joking; and when the dinner was ended, it was serious Senior Puff himself who proposed a little dance. Everything was quickly cleared away; three cats sang, and soon Muzius's lively daughters were jumping and twisting valiantly with the young cats.

I did not budge from the side of the beauty; I asked her for a dance; she gave me her paw and we joined one of the sets. Ah, how her breath caressed my cheek! How my breast trembled against hers! How tightly I embraced her sweet body with my paws! Oh the blissful, divinely blissful moment!

When we had danced about three polkas, I led the beauty into a corner of the cellar and gallantly served her some refreshments, whatever was there, as the party was not actually planned as a ball. Then I gave free rein to my feelings. Again and again I pressed her paw to my lips and assured her that I would be the happiest mortal if she would love me a little.

"Unhappy wretch," suddenly said a voice behind me. "Unhappy wretch, what are you doing! That is your daughter Mina!"

I trembled, for I recognized the voice! It was Miesmies! Fate played capriciously with me that at the very moment when I thought I had completely forgotten Miesmies, I found out—which I could not have suspected—that I had fallen in love with my own child! Miesmies was in deep mourning; I did not know what to think of that. "Miesmies," I said gently, "Miesmies, what brings you here? Why are you in mourning and—oh heavens!—those girls—Mina's sisters?" I had the strangest feelings!—My hateful rival, the black-yellow-grey, had left Miesmies right after he was defeated by my knightly valor in that murderous duel and had gone away, no one knew where, when his wound had healed. Then Muzius asked for her paw, which she gladly gave him; and it did

58. "Surrender by the little hand," or "surrender without formalities."

him credit and proved his sense of delicacy that he never told me of this relationship. So those gay little kittens were only my Mina's step-sisters!

"Oh Murr," said Miesmies tenderly, after she had related all that had happened. "Oh Murr! Your beautiful soul has only erred in the feeling that engulfed it. It was the love of the very tender father, not of the ardent lover, which awoke in your breast when you saw our Mina. *Our* Mina! Oh what a sweet word! Murr! Can you remain unmoved? Is all love extinguished in your heart for the one whom you loved so deeply—oh heavens, still love so deeply, who would have remained true to you till death if another had not come between and enticed her away with despicable wiles? Oh frailty, thy name is pussy! I know you are thinking that, but is it not a cat-like virtue to forgive the weak kitty? Murr! You see me bowed down, wretched at the loss of my third tender husband; but in this misery the love which was once my happiness, my pride, my life flares up again! Murr! Hear my confession! I still love you, and I thought if we could mar—" Tears choked her voice!

The whole scene was most painful to me. Mina sat there, pale and lovely as the newfallen snow which in autumn often kisses the late flowers and melts at once to bitter water!

(Editor's note. Murr! Murr! A plagiarist so soon again! In *Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story*[59] the hero of the book describes his beloved, also called Mina, in the same words.)

Silently I looked at the two of them, mother and daughter; the latter was infinitely more attractive to me, and since in our race close relationship is not a canonical bar to marriage—perhaps my expression betrayed me, for Miesmies seemed to read my most secret thoughts. "Barbarian!" she cried, leaping quickly over to Mina and embracing her passionately, "barbarian! What are you going to do? Will you reject this heart that loves you and heap crime on crime!" Although I did not comprehend what claims Miesmies could make or of what crimes she could reproach me, I found it more advisable to put a good face to a bad business so as not to spoil the gay party which the funeral had become. I assured Miesmies, therefore, who was quite beside herself, that it was only Mina's remarkable resemblance to her that had misled me and that

59. By Adelbert von Chamisso, published in 1814. Hoffmann was a close friend and great admirer of this writer. In Chamisso's tale the hero loses his shadow, i.e., soul.

I thought that the same feeling inflamed me which I bore for her, the still lovely Miesmies. Miesmies immediately dried her tears, sat down next to me, and began an intimate conversation with me as if nothing wrong had come between us. Since the youthful Hinzmann had asked Mina to dance, one can imagine in what a painful situation I found myself.

It was lucky for me that Senior Puff finally asked Miesmies for the last dance, as she might otherwise have made me all sorts of strange propositions. I crept very quietly out of the cellar and thought, "Time will tell."

I consider this funeral the turning point in my life, the time when my months of apprenticeship ended and I entered another sphere of life.

(S.p.)—caused Kreisler to go to the Abbot's chambers early in the morning. He found the worthy gentleman busy with ax and chisel opening a large box in which, as its shape indicated, a painting was probably packed. "Ha!" cried the Abbot to Kreisler as he entered, "It is lucky that you have come, Kapellmeister! You can help me with a heavy, tiresome job. The box has been closed with a thousand nails, as if for all eternity. It has just been sent straight from Naples, and there is a painting in it that I wish to hang in my study for the moment and not show to the brothers. That is why I did not ask any of them to help me; but now you could help me, Kapellmeister." Kreisler assisted him, and soon a large, beautiful painting in a splendid gilded frame was extracted from the box. Kreisler was not a little surprised when he found the spot bare above the little altar in the Abbot's study where a very charming picture of the Holy Family by Leonardo da Vinci had always hung. The Abbot had considered this picture one of the best of his collection, which contained many old originals, and yet this masterpiece had to yield its place to a painting which Kreisler recognized immediately as having great beauty but being also brand new.

With great effort, the Abbot and Kreisler attached the painting to the wall with masonry screws, and the Abbot placed himself in a good light and looked at the picture with such inner satisfaction, with such obvious pleasure, that it seemed as if he must have some special interest in it besides its being a really admirable painting. The subject matter of the picture was a miracle. The Holy Virgin was depicted, bathed in the radiant glory of heaven; in her left

hand she carried a lily; with the two middle fingers of her right hand she was touching the bare breast of a young man, and one saw that thick blood was dripping out of an open wound under her fingers. The young man had half raised himself up from his bed on which he was outstretched as though awakening from a mortal slumber; he had still not opened his eyes, but the transfigured smile that spread across his handsome face indicated that he could see the Mother of God in his dream, that the pain of the wound had been taken from him, that death no longer had any power over him. Connoisseurs would greatly admire the correctness of the drawing, the skillful arrangement of the group, the accurate depiction of light and shadow, the magnificent lines of the clothing, the great charm of the figure of Mary, especially the vivid color that the modern artist often does not have at his command. It was the indescribable expressions on the faces, however, that revealed most decisively the true genius of the artist, as is usually the case. Mary was the loveliest, most charming woman imaginable; and yet there was a commanding majesty in her expression, and divine bliss shone mildly from her dark eyes. Similarly, the divine rapture of the young man reawakening to life was conceived and depicted by the creative spirit of the artist with unusual power. Indeed, Kreisler knew no painting of the modern era that he could compare to this marvelous picture; he said so to the Abbot, discussing at some length the individual beauties of the work, and then added that scarcely anything better had been painted in recent times.

"That," smiled the Abbot, "has a good reason, as you, Kapellmeister, will find out immediately. It is a peculiar thing about our young artists that they study and study, invent, draw, make enormous sketches, and finally produce something lifeless and rigid that cannot fathom life because it has no life. Instead of carefully copying the works of the great, old masters that they have chosen for models, and thus penetrating their particular spirit, they wish to be masters themselves right away and paint imitations; but thereby they slip into an imitation of unimportant things, which makes them appear as childish and ridiculous as the man who, wishing to seem like a great man, tries to cough, to snore, and to walk a little bit bent over as the great man does. Our young painters lack the real inspiration that summons a picture from the soul in all its perfect glory and vividness. One can see how now this one, now that one, struggles in vain to achieve that sublime, spiritual mood with-

out which no work of art can be created. What these wretched painters consider true inspiration such as elevated the happy, calm mind of the older painters is only a strangely mixed feeling of arrogant admiration for their own thoughts and of worried, tormenting concern for imitating the old models in the smallest details. So the figure which is supposed to participate in a bright and happy life, although itself alive, turns into a repulsive caricature. Our young painters cannot create a clear representation of the image conceived in their minds; and may it not be that the real reason why they cannot, even if everything else turns out pretty well, is the unsuccessful coloration? In a word, they can at best draw, but they cannot paint at all. It is, of course, not true that the knowledge of colors and their treatment has been lost and that our young painters are lacking in industry. It is impossible that that knowledge is lost, since the art of painting has existed without interruption since the beginning of the Christian era, when it became a true art; masters and pupils form an uninterrupted, continuous line, and the changes which actually lead to a gradual deviation from a lifelike representation could have no influence on the transmission of the mechanics involved. As to the artists' industry, they might be accused of a superabundance of it rather than a lack. I know a young artist who, although starting out pretty well, paints and repaints a picture until everything dissolves into a stolid lead color and so, perhaps, resembles his inner thoughts, which he cannot depict vigorously and vividly. Look there, Kapellmeister, at a picture from which there breathes true, wonderful life because true, pious inspiration created it! The miracle is clear to you. The youth who rises from the couch there was attacked by murderers when quite defenseless, and given a mortal blow. He who formerly had been a godless blasphemer and had in satanic delusion despised the commands of the Church called loudly upon the Holy Virgin for help, and it pleased God's Heavenly Mother to awaken him from death so that he might live and comprehend his errors and dedicate himself in pious submission to the Church and its service. This youth, to whom the Virgin showed such mercy, is the painter of the picture."

Kreisler expressed his great astonishment at what the Abbot told him and ended by saying that the miracle must have occurred very recently.

"You, too," said the Abbot in a gentle, mild tone, "you, too,

my dear Johannes, are of the foolish opinion that the mercy gate of Heaven is now closed, so that compassion in the form of the saint, to whom the oppressed man ardently prays when crushed by agony, is no longer able to wander here to appear to the needy and bring him peace and comfort! Believe me, Johannes, miracles have never ceased, but man's eye is blinded by sinful blasphemy; it cannot endure Heaven's divine radiance and is therefore unable to recognize the mercy of the eternal power when it reveals itself in a visible form. But, my dear Johannes, the most wonderful, most divine miracles occur in the inner soul of man himself, and he should declare this miracle as loudly as he can in word, sound, or color. That monk who painted the picture has gloriously proclaimed the miracle of his conversion; and so—Johannes, I must speak about you; words pour from my heart—you proclaim in mightly sounds from the depths of your soul the wonderful miracle of the recognition of the eternal, clear light. And that you are able to, is not that also a merciful miracle which the eternal power grants for your salvation?"

Kreisler felt strangely stirred by the Abbot's words. As so rarely happened, a complete belief in his inner creative power flared up and a feeling of blissful satisfaction flowed through him.

Meanwhile, Kreisler had not turned his eyes from the miraculous picture; but just as we frequently only later discover the figures in the dark background, especially when, as was the case here, strong lighting effects are employed in the foreground or middle ground of the picture, so Kreisler had only just noticed that fleeing through the door was a figure who, wrapped in a broad cloak, held in his hand a dagger on which a faint ray of the glory of the Queen of Heaven seemed to fall. It was evidently the murderer; as he fled, he glanced backward, and on his face was a dreadful expression of fear and horror.

Kreisler was electrified when he recognized the features of Prince Hektor in the murderer's face. It seemed to him too that he had seen the revived youth somewhere, although only fleetingly. A hesitation that he could not understand prevented him from sharing this observation with the Abbot, but he asked the Abbot if he did not find it disturbing and offensive that the painter had introduced into the foreground, although in the shadow, objects of modern apparel and, as he just now observed, also clothed the youth, that is himself, in modern dress.

There actually was in the picture, in the foreground at one side, a small table and a chair, on the arm of which hung a Turkish shawl, as well as an officer's hat and a saber on the table. The youth wore a modern shirt, a buttoned-up vest, and a dark buttoned-up coat, the cut of which, however, was ample. The Queen of Heaven was clothed as one is accustomed to see her in the pictures by the best old masters.

"To me," replied the Abbot to Kreisler's question, "to me the details in the foreground as well as the youth's coat are not at all offensive, but I think that the painter would have been filled with wordly vanity and conceit, not with divine grace, if he had deviated in the slightest point from the truth. He had to present the miracle as it really happened, true according to place, surroundings, clothing, etc., because then it can be seen at a glance that the miracle occurred in our time, and thus the painting of the pious monk becomes a beautiful trophy of the Church militant in these days of skepticism and depravity."

"And yet," said Kreisler, "and yet, I find this hat, this saber, this shawl, this table, this chair—I find them all awkward, and I wish the painter had left out all the objects in the foreground and put a robe around himself instead of a coat. Be honest, Your Grace, can you imagine a sacred story in modern dress, a Holy Joseph in a heavy overcoat, a saint in a frock coat, a Virgin in a dress with a Turkish shawl around her shoulders? Would not that seem to you to be a mean and dreadful profanation of the sublime? And yet the old masters, primarily the German ones, depicted the Bible stories in the dress of their times; and the assertion would be quite false that those costumes were more picturesque than the present-day ones, which are indeed foolish and unpicturesque, especially some of the women's clothing. Yet many styles of previous ages were exaggerated and monstrous; just think of those elongated, curved beak-like shoes, and those padded baggy trousers, and those jackets with slashes and sleeves, etc. Quite intolerable and deforming both body and face were many women's clothes as seen in old pictures, giving young, blooming, lovely girls the appearance of cross old ladies simply because of their dresses. And yet those pictures have never offended anybody."

"Now," replied the Abbot, "now I can show you the difference, my dear Johannes, in a few words, between the good old days and the present degenerate ones. You see, in those days the sacred

stories were so much a part of people's lives—I might say, so determined their lives—that everyone believed that the miracles had occurred before their eyes and that any day the Almighty might allow something similar to happen. Therefore, the sacred story which the artist was depicting seemed to the painter to be taking place in the present. He saw God's mercy occurring among the people around him; and what he saw in actuality, he reproduced on his canvas. Today these stories seem very distant to us, something independent, not occurring in the present time, but only maintaining a feeble existence in our memories; and the artist strives in vain for a vital point of view because, even if he does not want to admit it to himself, his sensitivity has become deadened by his involvement in the world. But it is just as silly and ridiculous to condemn the old masters for ignorance of historical costumes and to give this as the reason for their using only the costumes of their own times in their pictures as it is when our present-day artists try to use the wildest and most tasteless medieval costumes in their depictions of the sacred stories and by doing so reveal that what they have undertaken to depict they have not observed directly in life but have contented themselves with an automatic reproduction of what they have seen in the old masters. Because, my dear Johannes, modern times seem profane to us, an ugly contradiction to the pious legends; because no one is capable of imagining those miracles as occurring today, the representation of them in modern dress seems to us to be tasteless, grotesque, even sacrilegious. But if the eternal powers should permit a miracle really to occur before our eyes, then it would not be right at all to change the dress of our period, just as modern painters must be careful to paint the dress of the period they are depicting as accurately as a careful study can determine. The painter was right; I repeat it again, the painter of this picture was right in indicating the present day, and those objects in the picture that you, dear Johannes, find objectionable fill me with holy awe, since I imagine myself entering the little room in the house in Naples where the miracle of the revival of the young man occurred a couple of years ago."

Kreisler was stirred to all kinds of thoughts by the Abbot's words. He felt that the Abbot was right about much that he said; but he thought that the Abbot's opinion of the piety of the olden days and the depravity of modern times was too much the monk who wanted to have and to see signs, miracles, and trances, which should not be necessary to a pious, childlike mind that can exer-

cise true Christian virtue without the convulsive ecstasies of an intoxicating cult; that precisely this true virtue has not vanished from the earth at all, and if it had, then the eternal powers who have abandoned us and granted the dark powers free rein would not wish to lead us back to the right path by a miracle.

For the moment Kreisler kept these thoughts to himself and contemplated the painting in silence. The more he observed it, the more the murderer's features emerged from the background; and Kreisler became convinced that the living model for the picture could be none other than Prince Hektor.

"It seems to me," began Kreisler, "it seems to me, Your Grace, that I see a mighty sharpshooter there in the background, one who has chosen as his prey the noblest animal, namely man, whom he is stalking in various ways. This time, as I can see, he has taken an excellent, well-polished dagger and hit well; but he did badly with the gun, since he missed a lively stag just a short time before. Indeed, I am very curious about the *curriculum vitae* of this determined hunter, even for a condensed excerpt of it, which could show me where I might find my place and whether it would be advisable to address myself to the Holy Virgin for a license and letter of protection!"

"Just wait," said the Abbot, "just wait for time to pass, Kapellmeister! I would be surprised if much that now lies in the dark were not made clear to you very soon. Much can happen that will accord with your wishes, which I have only just learned. It seems strange—so much I can tell you—it seems strange that they are in the grossest error concerning you at Sieghartshof. Meister Abraham may well be the only one who sees your inner thoughts."

"Meister Abraham!" cried Kreisler. "Do you know that honorable gentleman?"

"You forget," smiled the Abbot, "you forget that our beautiful organ owes its wonderful new structure to Meister Abraham's skill! But more later! Just wait patiently for what will happen."

Kreisler took his leave of the Abbot; he was about to go to the park to consider the many thoughts that were revolving in his mind, but when he was already downstairs, he heard behind him someone calling, *"Domine, domine Capelmeistere!—paucis te volo!"*[60] It was Pater Hilarius, who assured him he had been waiting with the greatest impatience for the end of his long conference

60. Distorted Latin. "Sir, sir Kapellmeister! I wish [to say] a few words with you."

with the Abbot. He had just been performing his duties as wine steward and brought up a marvelous Leisten wine which had been in the cellar for years. It was absolutely necessary for Kreisler to have a glass for breakfast to learn the value of this vintage and to be convinced that it was a fiery and invigorating wine created for a fine composer and a true musician.

Kreisler knew that it would be useless to try to escape from the enthusiastic Pater Hilarius, and in the mood that he was in, he was glad to enjoy a glass of good wine. He followed the happy wine steward, who led him to his cell, where he had arranged a bottle of the noble drink and a freshly baked loaf of white bread and salt and caraway on a little table that was covered with a clean cloth. *"Ergo bibamus!"* cried Pater Hilarius as he filled the lovely green goblets and clinked glasses cheerfully with Kreisler. "Am I right," he began after he had emptied his glass, "am I right, Kapellmeister? Our worthy master would like to tease you into putting on a long robe? Don't do it, Kreisler! I am happy wearing the cowl; I would not lay it aside for any price, but *distinguendum est inter et inter!* A good glass of wine and a fine church song are my whole world, but you—you! You have been created for quite different things; life still calls to you in other ways; other lights than altar candles burn for you! Well, Kreisler, to mention the matter briefly—your health—*vivat* your young lady; and when you marry, in spite of his annoyance, our Abbot will send you through me the best wine there is in our cellar."

Kreisler was unpleasantly affected by Hilarius's words, just as it pains us when we see something delicate and pure seized by rough, clumsy hands. "What," said Kreisler, withdrawing his glass, "what a lot you know and hear about within your four walls!"

"Domine!" cried Pater Hilarius. *"Domine!* Kreisler, no harm meant. *Video mysterium,*[61] but I will keep my mouth shut! Don't you want—Well, let us breakfast *in camera et faciemus bonum cherubim*[62]—and *bibamus,* that the Lord maintain the peace and good will in the Abbey that has reigned till now."

"Is that," asked Kreisler tensely, "is that now in danger?"

"Domine," said Pater Hilarius softly as he pulled his chair closer to Kreisler. *"Domine dilectissime!*[63] You have been here long

61. "I see a mystery."
62. "In our cell and get the cherubim on our side."
63. "Dearest sir."

enough to know the harmony in which we live; how the brothers' varied inclinations unite in a certain gaiety which is encouraged by our surroundings, by the mildness of the monastic discipline, and by our whole manner of living. Perhaps that has come to an end. I must tell you, Kreisler, that Pater Cyprianus, who has long been expected and who was most earnestly recommended to the Abbot by Rome, has just arrived. He is still a young man, but there is not a trace of cheerfulness in his dried-up, rigid face; on his gloomy, withered features lies a pitiless severity, which proclaims an asceticism intensified by excessive self-mortification. At the same time, his whole being reveals a certain hostile contempt for everything that is around him, that may well owe its origin to a feeling of spiritual superiority to us all. He has already inquired in broken phrases about the monastic discipline and seems to be very angered by our manner of living. Look out, Kreisler, this newcomer will distort our whole order which we have found so comfortable. Look out, *nunc probo!*[64] The brothers that are inclined to strictness will easily attach themselves to him and will soon form a party opposed to the Abbot and will probably not be the losers, because it seems certain to me that Pater Cyprianus is an emissary of His Papal Highness, to whose will the Abbot must submit. Kreisler! What will become of our music, of your pleasant stay here! I mentioned our well-organized choir and how we are quite able to sing well the works of the greatest masters, but our gloomy ascetic made a dreadful face and said such music was for the profane world but not for the Church, from which Pope Marcellus II[65] had quite properly wished to ban it. *Per diem,* if there is not to be any more choir and my wine cellar is to be locked up, then—but for the moment *bibamus!* No use worrying ahead of time. *Ergo*—glug, glug."

Kreisler said that matters would probably turn out all right in regard to the newcomer, who perhaps looked stricter than he really was, and that he himself, for his part, could not believe that the Abbot, having the firm character that he had always shown, would submit so readily to the will of the strange monk, especially as he himself was not without important, fruitful connections in Rome.

64. "Now I'll stop."

65. Pope Marcellus II (1501–55), a member of the humanistic reform movement, was only Pope a few days.

At that moment the bells were rung, a sign that the ceremonial reception of the new brother Cyprianus into the Order of Holy Benedict was to take place.

Kreisler set out for the church with Pater Hilarius, who hastily swallowed the dregs in his goblet with a half-fearful *bibendum quid.* From the windows of the corridor through which they were passing, they could see into the chambers of the Abbot. "Look, look!" cried Pater Hilarius, as he pulled Kreisler to the corner of one of the windows. Kreisler looked in and saw in the Abbot's room a monk who was speaking urgently with the Abbot, whose face was flushed. Finally the Abbot knelt down before the monk, who blessed him.

"Am I right," said Hilarius softly, "am I right when I look for and find something special, something strange in this foreign monk who suddenly breezes into our Abbey?"

"Certainly," replied Kreisler, "certainly there is something odd about this Cyprianus, and I would not be surprised if certain circumstances were not soon revealed."

Pater Hilarius joined the brothers, to march with them in a solemn procession into the church, the crucifix at the head, the lay brothers at the sides with lighted candles and banners.

When the Abbot and the foreign monk walked past Kreisler, Kreisler realized at the first glance that Brother Cyprianus was the young man whom the Holy Virgin had restored to life in the picture. But still another premonition suddenly gripped Kreisler. He ran up to his room, got out the little likeness that Meister Abraham had given him; there was no doubt! He saw the same young man, only younger, more vigorous, and depicted in an officer's uniform. When—

4

The Salutary Results of Higher Culture

The Maturer Months of Manhood

(M.c.) Hinzmann's touching sermon, the funeral feast, lovely Mina, finding Miesmies again, the dance—all these events had aroused in my breast such a muddle of conflicting feelings that, as is said quite commonly, I did not know what to do with myself, and feeling quite miserable, I wished I were in my grave in the cellar like Muzius. Now that was pretty bad; I really do not know what would have become of me if a true poetic soul had not dwelt in me and provided me with many poems which I did not neglect to write down. The divinity of poetry is primarily seen in the fact that, even though finding rhymes makes one sweat at times, writing verses produces a wonderful feeling of ease which conquers all earthly sorrow, even—as someone has claimed—frequently overcoming hunger and toothache. That person is supposed to have been quite properly beside himself when death robbed him of his father, his mother, his wife, but never to have been inconsolable, since the thought of the marvelous elegy he was composing filled his mind; and he married again merely so that he would not have to renounce the hope of having another tragic inspiration of the same kind.

Here are the lines which with poetic strength and verity depict my condition as well as my transition from sorrow to joy.

> What wanders there through darkened ways
> In barren cellar's loneliness?
> What calls to me "no more delays!"
> What voice its sorrow does confess?

There lies the grave of faithful friend,
His spirit reaches out to me.
My pity eases his sad end,
'Tis I who pledge a life to be!

But no—that is no fleeting shadow
Which utters music so divine.
She moans a husband, she is sad, oh
Sad for him whose love was wine.
Enslaved by happy bonds of passion
Rinaldo comes, his eyes afire;
And yet—beware, claws are in fashion,
And dread the glance of jealous ire!

'Tis she—the wife—where can I hide?
Ha, what emotions stir my breast!
In virgin snow of youthful pride
I spy of life its highest zest.
She jumps, she leaps, a radiance fair
Surrounds a very lucky me.
A sweet aroma fills the air.
The soul is dark, the heart is free.

The friend is dead—and *she* is here—
O bliss—O rapture—bitter pain.
The wife—the daughter—dreadful fear—
Ha, dost thou, heart, crack thus in twain?
But tell me, can a funeral meal
And giddy dance confuse the mind?
No—earthy drives I must not feel;
A fatal radiance makes me blind.

Avaunt ye phantoms of deceit!
Retire before my higher aims!
The puss is tricky but discreet;
She loves, she hates, she just plays games.
No glance, no sound escape her lip,
O Mina, Miesmies, false you be!
Destructive poison I'll not sip.
Thus Muzius be avenged—I flee!

Transfigured cat! I mourn for you
When eating roasted beef and fish.
I praise your deeds and wisdom true,
To be like you is my sole wish.
It was a vicious, evil dog
That ruined you, my noble friend.
That bloody spitz I'd like to flog!
Your mourners will avenge your end.

So dull, so troubled was my mind,
I could not comprehend my plight.
High thanks are due the muses kind,
Warm thanks I give to fancy's flight.
The world begins to look much sweeter,
A worthy appetite is mine.
Like Muzius I'm a hearty eater
And glow in poetry's radiant shine.

O Art, thou child from outer space,
Consoler of the woeful me!
May I with constant, easy grace
Give birth to gentle poetry.
And "Murr" all noble women must
Declare, with gentle youths. "O, Murr,
Poetic soul, a tender trust
Is stirred in me by your sweet purr!"

The effect of writing little verses was so beneficial that I could not content myself with this one poem but wrote several, one after another, with the same ease and success. I would share the best ones with the gentle reader if I had not planned to publish them along with several jokes and sketches which I had written at my leisure and at which I almost split laughing, under the general title *What I Produced in Hours of Inspiration*.[1] To my great glory, I must say that even during the months of my youth, when passion's storm had not yet subsided, I had a clear understanding, a fine feeling for what is proper that kept an upperhand over any abnormal sensual intoxication. I succeeded in suppressing completely my love for Mina that had so suddenly burgeoned forth.

1. "Was ich gebar in Stunden der Begeisterung."

When I considered everything calmly, this passion seemed to me rather foolish in my circumstances; then I found out also that Mina, in spite of her innocent, childlike appearance, was a fresh, stubborn thing, who on occasions scratched the eyes of the most modest young tomcats. But to avoid any backsliding, I carefully avoided seeing Mina; and since I was even more alarmed at Miesmies's supposed claims and her strange, eccentric nature, I kept to my room to avoid meeting either of them and visited neither the cellar, nor the attic, nor the roof. My master seemed pleased with this. He allowed me, when he was studying at his writing table, to sit behind his back on the chair and to stretch my neck forward and peek under his arm at the book he was reading. They were very nice books which we, I and my master, studied together in this way; for example, Arpe's *De prodigiosis naturae et artis operibus Talismanes et Amula dicits,* Becker's *Bezauberte Welt,* Francisci Petrarca's *Gedenkbuch,*[2] etc. These books distracted me extraordinarily and gave my spirits a new lift.

My master had gone out; the sun was shining in a friendly way; the spring breezes were blowing gaily through the window. I forgot my resolutions and strolled up onto the roof. I had scarcely arrived there when I saw Muzius's widow coming out from behind a chimney. Frightened, I stopped as if rooted to the spot; I could already hear myself being overwhelmed with reproaches and protestations. Far from that. Young Hinzmann was following right behind her, and he addressed the beautiful widow with sweet names. She stopped and received him with gracious words. Both greeted each other with clear expressions of deep tenderness and then went quickly past me, without greeting me or paying the least attention to me. Young Hinzmann must have been ashamed of himself, because he bowed his head to the ground; but the frivolous, coquettish widow tossed me a scornful glance.

Psychically, the tomcat is a very foolish creature. Could I not, must I not have been glad that Muzius's widow was provided with an admirer? And yet I could not suppress a certain anger that almost had the appearance of jealousy. I swore never to visit

2. Peter Friedrich Arpe (1682–1748) [this work appeared in German translation in 1792]; Balthasar Becker (1634–98), a Dutch minister [this book is a rationalist attack on sorcery and on a belief in witches]; Francesca Petrarca (1304–1374) [his *Rerum memorandarum* libri first appeared in Germany in Augsburg, 1541].

the roof again where I thought I had experienced a great insult. So instead of that, I now spent my time on the windowseat, sunned myself, looked down at the street to amuse myself, mulled over many deep thoughts, and thus combined the pleasant with the useful. One thought that occupied me was why it never occurred to me to sit by the door of the house or to roam around the streets as I saw many of my race doing without fear or hesitation. I imagined that it must be a very pleasant occupation and was convinced that, now I had attained a more mature age and gained experience, there could no longer be any fear of those dangers in which I had become involved when fate hurled me, a mere boy, into the world. Confidently, therefore, I wandered down the stairs and sat on the threshold in the bright sunshine. It goes without saying that I assumed an attitude that would at first glance show I was a properly brought up cat. I found it uncommonly pleasant by the door. While the hot rays of the sun warmed my fur, I delicately washed my nose and whiskers with my curled-up paw; this so delighted a couple of young girls passing by, who undoubtedly were coming from school, since they were carrying large briefcases with locks, that they honored me with a piece of white bread, which I most graciously accepted with my usual gallantry.

I was playing with the proffered gift rather than really making preparations to eat it, and how great was my fright when a loud growling behind me suddenly interrupted me at this game; the mighty old man, Ponto's uncle, the poodle Scaramouche, stood before me. I was about to leap from the doorway when Scaramouche called to me, "Don't be a fool. Stay there. Do you think I want to eat you?"

With the humblest politeness I inquired how I might with my feeble strength serve Herr Scaramouche, who replied gruffly, "In no way, in no way can you serve me, Mosye Murr. How could you possibly? But I wish to ask you if you know where my disgraceful nephew, young Ponto, is hiding. You used to run around with him at one time, and you seem to be great pals, which is not at all to my liking. Well? Just speak out if you know where that boy is running around; I have not seen him at all in the last several days."

Embarrassed by the proud, disdainful manner of the cross old man, I assured him coldly that there had never been any question of a close friendship between me and young Ponto and never would

be. Moreover, Ponto had quite drawn away from me recently, and I had not sought him out.

"Well," grumbled the old man, "well, I am glad; that shows that the boy has a sense of honor and is not eager to consort with people of all shades."

That was quite intolerable. Rage overpowered me; the spirit of the *Burschentum* stirred in me; I forgot all my fear and spat out a violent "Old boor!" right in the face of that coarse Scaramouche, raised my right paw with claws spread, aiming right for the poodle's left eye. The old dog retreated a couple of steps and spoke a little less brusquely than before, "Well, well, Murr. Don't be offended. You are a good cat, but I warn you, look out for that young spark, Ponto! He is, you may believe me, an honest fellow, but frivolous —frivolous! Ready for any silly prank; takes nothing seriously; no manners! Look out, I repeat, for he will entice you into all kinds of society where you do not belong, and you will have to force yourself with enormous effort to enter a kind of social life that is repugnant to your deepest nature and by which your individuality, your simple natural manners, which you have shown me, will be ruined. Look, my good Murr; you are, as I have already said, estimable as a cat and have an ear willingly inclined toward good instruction! Look! However many crazy, unpleasant pranks a young man plays, if he occasionally shows the gentle, often sweetish temperament that people with an open nature stress, then it is said in that French expression, '*Au fond* he is a good fellow,' and that supposedly excuses everything he does that violates custom and order. But the *fond* in which the good kernel hides lies so deep, and so much garbage from a wild life has collected on top, that it is nipped in the bud. But that foolish good nature is often dished up for the true feeling for the good, but the devil take it if good nature cannot recognize the spirit of evil in a shining mask. Trust, O tomcat, the experiences of an old poodle who has tried out the world a bit, and do not let yourself be deluded by that damned '*Au fond* he is a good fellow.' If you should see my dissolute nephew, you can tell him everything that I have said to you and decline any further friendship with him. God commend you! You surely are not planning to eat that, my good Murr?"

With that the old poodle Scaramouche snatched up the little piece of white bread that was in front of me and then stalked off

leisurely, his head down, allowing his long, hairy ears to drag along the ground, and wagging his tail a little.

Thoughtfully I gazed after the old dog, with whose worldly wisdom I found myself in full agreement. "Is he gone, is he gone?" someone whispered quite close behind me; and I was not a little astonished when I saw young Ponto, who had crept behind the door and waited until the old dog had left me. Ponto's sudden appearance embarrassed me a little, since his uncle's message, which I ought to deliver, seemed a bit delicate to me. I thought of those horrible words which Ponto had shouted after me, "If you should ever decide to express hostile opinions of me, I am your superior in strength and skill. One leap, a good bite with my sharp teeth would finish you off on the spot." I found it very advisable to remain silent.

My hesitation may have made my behavior seem cold and forced; Ponto looked at me sharply. Then he burst out in a loud laugh and cried, "I can see it, friend Murr! My old uncle has been talking all sorts of nonsense about my activities; he has described me as dissolute and addicted to all sorts of mad pranks and excesses. Don't be so foolish as to believe a word of all that. First of all—look at me closely and tell me what you think of my appearance!" Observing young Ponto, I found that he had never looked so well nourished, so lively, that his coat had never looked so nice and elegant, that there had never been such a harmony in his whole person. I expressed this to him frankly.

"Well, then," said Ponto. "Well, then, my good Murr, do you really believe that a poodle who runs around in bad company, is addicted to low behavior, who is systematically dissolute without finding any real pleasure in it, but merely from boredom, as is really the case with many poodles—do you believe that such a poodle can look as I do? You praise especially the harmony in my person. That should prove to you how gravely my cross uncle is in error. Since you are a literary cat, recall that wise man who replied to one who criticized the lack of harmony in the whole bearing of a depraved man, 'Is it possible for depravity to have unity?'[3] Do not be surprised for a moment, friend Murr, at my uncle's dreadful slanders. Irritable and miserly, as uncles are, he has directed all his

3. An inexact quotation from Goethe's translation of Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau.*

anger at me because he had to pay a little gambling debt *par honneur*, which I had piled up at a sausage store. The owner had allowed the forbidden game at his place and often made considerable loans in smoked sausages, groats, and liver (made up into sausages) to the players. And then the old dog keeps thinking of a certain period in which my manner of living was not exactly praiseworthy but which is now long past and has changed to a superior state."

At that moment a fresh doberman pincher came along, stared at me as if he had never seen anything like me before, screamed the coarsest insults into my ears, and then snapped at my tail, which was stretched out before me and which seemed to displease him. Just as I was about to put myself in a posture of defense, Ponto leapt at the ill-mannered rowdy, knocked him over, ran him down two or three times, so that he shot away like an arrow, his tail between his legs, lamenting miserably.

This proof which Ponto gave me of his good intentions, of his constant friendship, touched me markedly; and I thought that the "*Au fond* he is a good fellow" which uncle Scaramouche had cast doubt upon should be applied to Ponto in the better meaning and could excuse him, as it had many another. It really seemed to me as if the old dog saw things too blackly and that Ponto might play frivolous pranks but never bad ones. I expressed all this to my friend quite frankly, and with the most courteous expressions I thanked him for undertaking my defense.

"I am glad," replied Ponto, looking around with a gay and roguish expression, as was his habit; "I am glad, my good Murr, that the pedantic old dog has not confused you but that you recognize my good heart. I took that fresh boy to task well, didn't I, Murr? He will remember that for a long time. Actually, I have had my eye out for him all day; the rascal stole a sausage from me yesterday and had to be thoroughly disciplined for it. That the insult you received was avenged at the same time and that I could prove my friendship to you in this way is not at all displeasing to me. I hit two birds with one stone, as the saying is. But now to return to our previous conversation! Look at me again, my dear cat, very carefully and tell me if you notice any remarkable change in my appearance!"

I looked at my young friend carefully and—heavens! I only just then noticed the beautifully worked silver collar that he was

wearing and on which was engraved "Baron Alcibiades von Wipp. 46 Marshall Street."

"What," I cried astonished, "what, Ponto, you have left your master, the Professor of Esthetics, and transferred to a baron?"

"I did not," replied Ponto, "actually leave the Professor, but he drove me away with kicks and blows."

"How could that have happened?" I asked. "Your master used to show you as much love and kindness as possible."

"Ah," replied Ponto, "that is a stupid, vexatious story that only turned out well by a strange chance. My silly good nature, in which a little vanity is mixed, was responsible for the whole affair. I wanted to prove my constant vigilance to my master and at the same time show him my skill and education. Therefore, I was accustomed to take to my master any small object that was lying on the floor without being commanded to. Well! You perhaps know that Professor Lothario has a very young and very beautiful wife who loves him very tenderly, which he cannot doubt as she tells him so every minute and overwhelms him with caresses when he is buried in his books preparing his lectures. She is domesticity itself, since she never leaves the house before noon; she gets up by ten-thirty, and simple in her habits, she is not too proud to consult with the cook and the maid in the affairs of the house in the greatest detail, and if the weekly money has been used up too early for certain expenses that are not budgeted, and she cannot get any more from the Professor, she is also not too proud to borrow from them. She pays the interest on these loans with her almost new clothes; these, as well as feather hats which the astonished world of servant girls sees her maid dressed in on Sundays, could well be considered rewards for certain secret errands and other favors. One could scarcely criticize such a charming woman, possessed of so many perfections, for this little foolishness (if it can be called foolishness) to aim zealously and to endeavor constantly to be always dressed in the latest style. The most elegant and expensive clothes are not elegant and expensive enough; if she has worn a dress three times and a hat four times and her Turkish shawl a month, she feels an aversion to them and throws away the most expensive wardrobe for a song and, as has been noted, lets the maids wear them. It is not surprising that the wife of a Professor of Esthetics has a good feeling for a beautiful external appearance,

and it can only be pleasing to such a husband when this feeling is manifested by his wife allowing the glance from her sparkling eyes to rest with obvious pleasure on beautiful young men and by occasionally running after them. I often noticed that this or that charming young man who attended the Professor's lectures failed to find the door of the auditorium and, instead, quietly opened the door which led into his wife's room and just as quietly entered. I was forced to believe that this confusion was not so unintentional, or at least that nobody regretted it; for nobody hastened to correct his error, but all who entered stayed a while and then left with a smile of satisfaction, as if the visit to the Professor's wife had been as pleasant and useful as an esthetic lecture by the Professor. The lovely Letitia (for such was her name) did not like me especially. She did not allow me in her room, and perhaps she was right, since not even the most cultivated poodle belongs where he is constantly in danger of ripping Florentine lace and dirtying clothes that are lying around on the chairs. But it must have been the wish of her wicked guardian angel that I one day forced my way into her boudoir. The Professor had drunk more wine for lunch than was proper and was in high spirits. Having arrived home, he went, quite contrary to his custom, directly into his wife's room; and I sneaked in with him through the door, although I do not know what special desire made me do it. His wife was in a negligee, white as the new-fallen snow; her whole outfit betrayed not so much a certain negligence as the deepest art of dress which is concealed behind simplicity and, like a hidden enemy, all the more surely conquers. She was indeed very charming, and the half-intoxicated Professor was more strongly affected than usual and, quite enraptured with love, called his lovely wife by the sweetest names and overwhelmed her with the tenderest caresses and did not at all observe a certain distraction, a certain restless displeasure that was only too clearly expressed in her whole being. I found the growing tenderness of the intoxicated Professor of Esthetics unpleasant and burdensome. I turned to my old pastime and looked around on the floor. Just as the Professor cried out in the greatest ecstasy, 'Divine, sublime, heavenly woman, let us—' I danced up to him on my hindlegs and, very elegantly and, as usual, wagging the stump of my tail a little, brought him a fine orange-colored man's glove which I had found under my mistress's sofa. The Professor stared at the glove and, as if suddenly awakened with fright from a sweet dream,

cried, 'What is that—whose glove is that? How did it get in this room?' He took the glove from my mouth, looked at it, held it to his nose, and then cried again, 'Where did this glove come from? Letitia, speak, who has been here with you?' 'How strange,' replied the charming, loyal Letitia with an uncertain tone of embarrassment which she tried in vain to suppress. 'How strange you are, dear Lothar. Whose glove could it be, or whose is it? The major's wife was here and could not find her glove when she was ready to leave, and she thought she must have dropped it on the stairs.' 'The major's wife!' screamed the Professor quite beside himself. 'The major's wife, the little, fragile woman whose entire hand would fit into one of these thumbs! Damn it all, what fop was here? The damned thing smells of perfumed soap! Unhappy woman, who was here? What criminal, hellish fraud has disturbed my peace, my happiness here? Infamous, atrocious woman!'

"His wife was just preparing to faint when the chambermaid came in, and I sprang out quickly, glad to escape from the fearful quarrel I had caused.

"The next day the Professor was quite silent and withdrawn; only one thought seemed to occupy him; he seemed to be pondering only one idea. Could it be he? Those were the words which unconsciously escaped his lips from time to time. Toward evening he picked up his hat and cane; I leapt up and barked joyfully. He looked at me for a long time; tears sprang to his eyes; he spoke in a tone of deepest sorrow, 'My dear Ponto! Loyal, honest soul!' Then he quickly ran out the door, and I close behind him, determined to cheer up the poor man with all the arts at my command. Baron Alcibiades von Wipp, one of the most elegant gentlemen in our city, met us by the door on his horse. As soon as the Baron saw the Professor, he trotted over to us and inquired about the Professor's health and then about that of his wife. In his confusion the Professor stammered a few incomprehensible words. 'Indeed, very hot weather!' said the Baron and pulled a silk scarf out of his pocket, at the same time dropping a glove, which I, as usual, carried to my master. The Professor seized the glove hastily and cried, 'Is that your glove, Baron?' 'Certainly,' he replied, surprised at the Professor's vehemence. 'Certainly, I believe I just pulled it out of my coat pocket, and your helpful poodle picked it up.' 'Then I have the pleasure,' said the Professor in a cutting tone as he handed him the glove that I had found under the sofa in his

wife's room, 'then I have the pleasure of being able to hand you the mate to this glove which you lost yesterday.'

"Without waiting for the startled Baron's answer, the Professor ran wildly away.

"I was careful not to follow the Professor into his dear wife's room, since I could imagine the storm which would soon be heard even in the hall. But I listened in the corner of the hall and heard the Professor, his face glowing with rage, send the servant girl out of the room, then, when she dared to say a few fresh words, threw her out of the house. Finally, late in the night, the Professor came back to his room exhausted. With a soft whine I offered him my deepest sympathy in his trouble. Then he embraced me and pressed me to his breast as if I were his best friend. 'Good, honest Ponto,' he said in a very mournful tone. 'True soul, you, you alone have roused me from my infatuation which prevented me from seeing my shame; you have enabled me to cast off the yoke which a false woman placed on me, so that I can again become a free, dispassionate person. Ponto, how shall I thank you! Never, never shall you leave me; I will care for you as for my best friend; you alone will comfort me when I feel despair at my hard misfortune.'

"These touching expressions of a noble, grateful soul were interrupted by the cook, who dashed in, her face pale and distorted, and brought the Professor the dreadful message that the lady of the house was suffering from fearful cramps and was about to give up the ghost.

"For the next several days I scarcely saw the Professor. Feeding me, which my master had always lovingly attended to, was assigned to the cook, an unpleasant, disagreeable person, who only grudgingly gave me miserable, scarcely edible scraps instead of the usual good meals. Sometimes she forgot me completely, so that I was forced to sponge off my friends and even go scavenging to quiet my hunger.

"One day when I was creeping around the house, hungry and tired, with my ears trailing, the Professor finally gave me some attention. 'Ponto!' he smiled, his whole face sunshine. 'Ponto, my honest old dog, where have you been hiding? I haven't seen you for a long time. I do believe you have been neglected, quite against my wishes, and not properly fed. Well, come along. Today you will get your food from me again.'

"I followed my kind master into the dining room. His wife,

blossoming like a rose, her face—like her husband's—all sunshine, came toward him. They greeted each other more tenderly than ever; she called him 'angelic husband'; he, however, called her 'my little mouse'; and then they hugged and kissed each other like turtle doves. It was a real joy to see them. The charming lady was also friendlier to me than she had ever been; and you can well imagine, my good Murr, that I responded politely and gracefully, since gallantry is innate in me. Who could have suspected what was to be my doom! It would be very difficult for me to tell you in detail all the spiteful tricks my enemies employed to destroy me; and even more than that, it would exhaust you. I will limit myself to telling you about a few of them which will give you a true picture of my miserable situation. My master was accustomed to give me the usual servings of soup, vegetables, and meat in the dining room in a corner by the stove while he himself was dining. I ate with such good manners, with such neatness, that not the least little drop of fat was ever visible on the inlaid floor. How great was my horror one day when my dish broke into a hundred pieces when I touched it and the gravy poured out over the beautiful floor. The Professor rushed at me angrily, swearing dreadfully; and although his wife tried to make excuses for me, bitter irritation could be read in her pale face. She said that if the nasty mark could not be removed, the floor could be sanded or a new board inserted. The Professor harbored a terrible abhorrence for such repairs, and he could already hear the carpenters planing and hammering; it was his wife's sweet excuses that made him so aware of my supposed clumsiness and earned me a couple of severe boxes on the ear in addition to a scolding. I stood there, conscious of my innocence, quite bewildered, and did not know what to think or say. Not until that had happened to me two—three times did I notice the trick! Half-broken dishes were being set out that inevitably broke into a hundred pieces at the merest touch. I was no longer allowed in the dining room; I was fed outside by the cook, but so scantily that, driven by a gnawing hunger, I had to try to steal many a piece of bread and many a bone. This caused a great racket every time, and I was accused of selfish theft, although it was really for the satisfaction of the most essential needs. Things got still worse! One day the cook made a great outcry, complaining that a leg of fine mutton had vanished from the kitchen and must certainly have been stolen. The incident was brought to the Professor as an im-

portant household matter. He said that he had never noticed that I had any inclinations to steal and that my theft organ was not at all developed. It was not possible that I could have eaten a whole leg of mutton without leaving some trace of it. A search was made. The remains of the bone were found in my bed! Murr! Look. With my paw on my heart I swear to you that I was completely innocent, that it had not occurred to me to steal the roast; but what use protesting my innocence, since the evidence was against me! The Professor was all the angrier because he had taken my side and saw himself deceived in his good opinion of me. I was given a thorough beating. Even though the Professor let me see the disgust that he felt for me, his wife was all the friendlier, patted me on the back, which she had never done before, and even gave me an occasional tasty snack. How could I guess that it was all a fraud, and yet I was soon to find that out. The dining room door was open; my stomach empty, I looked in longingly and thought painfully of the good old days when the sweet aroma of roast meat filled the air and I never looked beggingly at the Professor in vain; at the same time I snuffled a bit, as the saying is. My mistress called, 'Ponto, Ponto!' and held out a lovely piece of meat with her delicate thumb and charming finger. It is possible that with an enthusiasm occasioned by an aroused appetite, I snapped at it a little more violently than necessary; but I did not bite the delicate, lily-like hand, that you can believe, my dear Murr. And yet she screamed, 'The bad dog!' and fell back in her chair in a faint; and to my horror I actually saw a couple of drops of blood on her thumb. The Professor was enraged; he beat me, kicked me, abused me so mercilessly that I would not now be sitting in the sun with you, my dear cat, if I had not saved myself by a hasty flight from the house. There could be no thought of returning. I realized that there was nothing to do about the black intrigue which my mistress had instigated against me out of pure lust for revenge for the glove, and I decided to seek out a new master at once. Formerly that would have been easy because of the charming gifts with which a kind Mother Nature had endowed me, but hunger and misery had so marked me that I was really afraid of being turned away everywhere because of my wretched appearance. Sadly, tormented by the gnawing pangs of hunger, I sneaked out the door. I saw Baron Alcibiades von Wipp, who was just going by, and I do not know where I got the idea of offering him my services. Perhaps it

was a murky feeling that I would have the opportunity in this way to avenge myself on the ungrateful Professor, as it later so turned out. I danced up to the Baron, begged, and when he looked at me with a certain pleasure, followed him to his home. 'Look!' he said to a young fellow whom he called his valet, although he did not have any other servants, 'Look, Frederick, at the poodle that has attached himself to me. If he were only more handsome!' Frederick praised the expression on my face and my elegant form and said I must have been badly treated by my master and had probably left him for that reason. As he also said that poodles which attached themselves to people of their own accord were usually loyal, honest animals, the Baron could not help keeping me. Although I now acquired a very fine coat, thanks to Frederick's care, the Baron did not seem to care much for me and barely tolerated my accompanying him on his walks. All that was to change. We met the Professor's wife on a walk. You will recognize, my dear Murr, the delightful soul—yes, I will say it—of this honorable poodle, when I assure you that although my mistress had hurt me very much, I felt a sincere delight in seeing her again. I danced around her, barked merrily, and expressed my joy in many ways. 'Look, it's Ponto!' she cried, patted me, and looked meaningfully at the Baron von Wipp, who had stopped. I jumped back to my master, who fondled me. He seemed to have hit upon some unusual thoughts. 'Ponto! Ponto! Could it possibly be true!'

"We had reached a nearby place of amusement. My mistress sat down with her friends, although the dear, kind Professor was not one of them. Baron von Wipp sat down nearby so that he could keep his eye on the Professor's wife without being specially noticed by her friends. I placed myself by my master and looked at him while I gently wagged my tail as if I were awaiting his commands. 'Ponto,' he repeated, 'Ponto. Could it be possible! Well,' he added after a short silence; 'well, it is time to make a try!' He took a little piece of paper from his pocket, wrote a few words in pencil on it, rolled it up and put it under my collar, and pointed toward the Professor's wife and called softly, 'Ponto. *Allons!*' I did not have to be the clever, worldly-wise dog I am to guess everything immediately. I went at once to the table where my mistress was sitting and pretended to have a great desire for the lovely cake that was on the table. The Professor's wife was friendliness itself; she handed me the cake with one hand, while she scratched my neck

with the other. I felt her pulling out the piece of paper. Soon she left her friends and went into a side passage. I followed her. I saw her reading the Baron's words eagerly, then take out a pencil from her knitting bag, write a few words on the same piece of paper, and roll it up again. 'Ponto,' she said to me, looking at me mischievously, 'Ponto, you are a clever, intelligent poodle when you bring things at the proper time!' She placed the bit of paper under my collar, and I dashed back to my master. He guessed immediately that I had brought an answer, for he took out the paper at once from under my collar. Her words must have been very comforting and nice, for the Baron's eyes sparkled with pleasure and he cried enraptured, 'Ponto—Ponto, you are a marvelous poodle. My lucky star led you to me.' You can imagine, my dear Murr, that I was no less happy, for I realized that I would rise high in my master's favor after what had happened.

"In my joy I voluntarily performed all kinds of tricks. I spoke, played dead, came to life again, refused the piece of white bread from the Jew, and eagerly ate the piece from the Christian, etc. 'An unusually intelligent dog!' an old lady called over who was sitting next to the Professor's wife. 'Uncommonly intelligent!' replied the Baron. 'Uncommonly intelligent!' echoed the voice of the Professor's wife. I only intend to tell you briefly, my dear Murr, that I continued delivering letters in the same way, and I still do so, even running into the Professor's house with little letters when the latter is absent. But if the Baron Alcibiades von Wipp slips over of an evening to the charming Letitia, I stay by the door and make such a furious racket barking when the Professor appears in the distance that my master can spot the approach of the enemy as well as I and can dodge him."

It seemed to me that I could not really approve of Ponto's behavior. I thought of the deceased Muzius, of my great repugnance to any collar; and that made me see clearly that anyone with an honest soul, such as a decent cat has, would scorn such intrigue. I expressed all this quite openly to Ponto. But he laughed in my face and asked if cats' morals were all that strict and whether I hadn't overstepped the line myself occasionally, i.e., done something that was too big to be put in a moral drawer. I thought of Mina and remained silent.

"In the first place," continued Ponto, "in the first place, my dear Murr, it is a quite ordinary maxim of life that no one can

escape his fate, no matter how much he tries to. As an educated cat, you can read more about that in a very instructive and pleasantly written book called *Jacques le fataliste*.[4] Was it not the decision of the eternal fates that the Professor of Esthetics, Herr Lothario—well, you understand, my dear cat, that the Professor, by the way he behaved with that glove (this story needs more publicity; you should write about it, Murr), has demonstrated a decided natural aptitude for becoming a member of that great order which so many men join with commanding dignity and the best mien without knowing it. Herr Lothario would have become a member even if there had been no Baron Alcibiades von Wipp and no Ponto. Had Herr Lothario deserved anything better from me than my throwing myself into the arms of his enemy? But the Baron would have certainly found other means of coming to an understanding with the Professor's wife, and the same injury would have been inflicted on the Professor without my getting any good from it; for I am benefiting from the happy relationship between the Baron and Letitia. We poodles are not such overly severe moralists that we castigate our own flesh and scorn the tidbits that are scarce enough."

I asked young Ponto whether the benefits that he got from his service with Baron Alcibiades von Wipp were so great and important that they balanced the unpleasant and oppressive things that were involved in servitude. I made it quite clear to him that this servitude would always be repugnant to a cat in whose heart the sense of liberty is ineradicable.

"You speak," replied Ponto, smiling proudly, "you speak, my dear Murr, as you understand things, or rather as your complete inexperience in the higher realms of life lets you see things. You do not know what it means to be the favorite of such a gallant, educated man as Baron Alcibiades von Wipp. For I probably do not have to tell you, my freedom-loving cat, that since that time when I behaved so cleverly and helpfully, I have become his favorite. A brief description of our way of life will help you to see how pleasant and beneficial my present situation is. We (I and my master) do not get up too early in the morning, but neither do we get up too late, i.e., at the stroke of eleven. I must point out that

4. A novel by Diderot (1712–84), evidently a favorite of Hoffmann's since the opening sentences of *Kreisleriana* correspond to the opening of this novel, which was published in Paris in 1797.

my large, soft bed is set up not far from the Baron's bed and that we snore together in such harmony that when we wake up, we do not know which one was snoring. The Baron pulls the bell cord, and his valet appears immediately, bringing the Baron a cup of smoking chocolate and me a china dish filled with the loveliest sweet coffee and cream, which I empty with the same appetite as the Baron does his cup. After breakfast we play together for a half hour; the exercise is not only beneficial to our health, but cheers the mind. If the weather is pleasant, the Baron usually looks out of the open window and observes the passersby with his spyglass. If not many people are passing by, there is another game which the Baron can play for an hour without getting tired of it. Under the Baron's window there is a stone in the sidewalk that has a special pinkish color, and in the middle of this stone there is a little hole chipped out. The game is to spit so cleverly that the little hole is hit right in the middle. Through constant practice, the Baron has learned to hit it on the third try and has won many bets. After this game, the important moment of dressing arrives. The Baron manages to comb and curl his hair and tie his neckerchief without the help of his valet. Since these difficult operations take a while, Frederick uses the time to groom me; i.e., washes my coat with a sponge dipped in lukewarm water; combs my hair, which the hairdresser has left long in certain appropriate places; and puts on my beautiful, silver collar, with which the Baron immediately honored me when he discovered my virtues. The next moments are dedicated to literature and the fine arts. That is, we go to a restaurant or a coffee house, enjoy a beefsteak or a chop, drink a glass of madeira wine, and peek into the latest magazines and newspapers. Then the morning visiting begins. We call on various famous actresses, singers, even dancers, to bring them the news of the day, especially reports of debuts of the previous evening. It is remarkable how skillfully Alcibiades von Wipp knows how to present his news in such a way as to keep the ladies always in good humor. A rival star never manages to attain even a part of the success that crowned the beauty he is at the moment visiting in her boudoir. The poor thing was hissed—mocked. And if a tremendous success cannot possibly be ignored, the Baron is always able to serve up some new scandalous tale about the lady, which is eagerly listened to and spread so that a suitable poison prematurely kills the flowers of the bouquet. More elegant visits to

Countess A., Baroness B., to the ambassador's wife C., etc., fill out the time till three-thirty; the Baron has now completed his actual business, so that by four o'clock he can dine. This he usually does in a restaurant. After dinner we go for coffee, often play a game of billiards, and then promenade a little if the weather permits, I on foot but the Baron frequently on horseback. The time for the theater arrives, an amusement the Baron never neglects. He is said to play a very important role at the theater, since he not only has to inform the audience about the production and the performing artists but also has to organize the appropriate applause and hissing so that good taste is kept within the correct bounds. He has a natural propensity for this. Since even the best people among my kind are unjustly barred from the theater, these hours are the only ones during which I am separated from my beloved Baron and amuse myself alone. What I do then, and how I use my connections with whippets, English spaniels, pugs, and other refined creatures, you will hear about shortly, my dear Murr! After the theater, we dine again in a restaurant, and the Baron abandons himself completely to gaiety. Everyone chatters, laughs, and finds everything divine, and nobody knows what he is saying and what he is laughing about and what should be considered divine. But that is exactly the sublime bit of the conversation, the whole social life of those who acknowledge the doctrine of elegance, as does my master. Sometimes the Baron goes out later in the night to this or that party and is said to be superb there. But I know nothing about that, for the Baron has never taken me along, for which he may well have his reasons. I have already told you how I sleep on a soft bed near the Baron. Confess now, my dear cat, judging by my manner of living which I have just described in such detail, how can my cross old uncle accuse me of wild and dissolute behavior? It is true, as I have already confessed to you, that some time ago there was good cause for all kinds of reproaches. I ran around in bad company and found a special delight in crashing wedding parties and creating quite useless rows. But I did that not from a real drive for rowdiness, but merely from a lack of higher culture, which I had not been able to acquire in the circumstances that existed in my Professor's house. But now everything is different. Wait! Whom do I see? There goes Baron Alcibiades von Wipp! He is looking around for me. He is whistling! *Au revoir,* dear sir!"

Quick as a flash, Ponto sprang toward his master. The Baron's

appearance corresponded exactly to the picture that I had formed in my mind from what Ponto had said about him. He was very tall, and not so much slim as thin as a rail. Clothing, posture, gait, gestures, all could serve as the prototype of the latest style; but, being fantastically exaggerated, they gave his whole person a strange, eccentric cast. He carried a small, very thin metal riding crop over which he made Ponto jump a couple of times. Although this seemed very degrading to me, I had to confess that Ponto now combined charm with a skill and dexterity that I had never noticed in him before. All in all, as the Baron strolled along with his chest thrust forward and his stomach pulled in, with a gait like a rooster's, and Ponto jumped gracefully, now ahead, now alongside of him, only giving proud, fleeting greetings to passing comrades, there was in him a certain something, which I could not clearly identify, that impressed me. I had a vague idea what Ponto meant by higher culture, and I tried to understand it clearly. But that was very difficult, or at any event, my efforts were quite in vain.

I later learned that with certain things, all problems, all theories that may form in the mind break down and that knowledge can only be acquired by actual practice; the higher culture which both the Baron Alcibiades von Wipp and the poodle Ponto attained belongs to these certain things.

The Baron Alcibiades von Wipp stared sharply at me through his lorgnette as he passed. It seemed to me that I read curiosity and anger in his glance. Could he have observed Ponto's conversation with me and taken offense at it? I became fearful and hastened up the steps.

I should describe my feelings now if I am to fulfill all the duties of a thorough autobiographer, and I can do it no better than in sublime verses which, as the saying is, I can shake out of my fur sleeve. I would—

(s.p.) "—have squandered the best part of my life with this simple, miserable toy.—And now you are complaining, you old fool, and blaming fate which you presumptuously defied! What business of yours were the aristocratic people of the world, what business of yours was the whole world which you mocked because you thought it was foolish and you yourself were the most foolish! You should have stuck to your craft, built organs, and not played the magician and prophet. They would not have stolen

her; my wife would be with me; I, a fine worker, would be sitting in my workshop, and my sturdy apprentices would be tapping and hammering around me, and we would be creating works which could not be compared in appearance and sound with any far and near. And Chiara! Perhaps lively boys would be clinging to me, perhaps I would be dandling a pert little daughter on my knee. Damn it, what is keeping me from running away this minute and searching through the world for my lost wife!" Meister Abraham, who had been talking to himself, swept the little automaton and all his tools off the table, jumped up, and strode violently back and forth. The thought of Chiara, which now almost never left him, aroused painful sorrow in his heart; and just as his life as a true artist had begun with Chiara, his unworthy irritation at having abandoned his handicraft and having ventured to practice true art left him. He opened Severino's book and looked for a long time at his lovely Chiara. Like a somnambulist who, robbed of his senses, only acts automatically in response to his thoughts, Meister Abraham went to a box that stood in the corner of his room, removed the books and things which were on it, opened it, took out the glass ball and all the apparatus for the experiment with the Invisible Maiden, attached the glass ball to a thin, silk string that hung down from the ceiling, and arranged everything in the room that was necessary for the hidden oracle. Not until everything was in place did he awake from the dreamlike stupor, and he was not a little astounded at what he had done. "Alas," he mourned aloud, as he sank back into his chair quite exhausted, quite wretched. "Alas, Chiara, poor, lost Chiara. I will never again hear your sweet voice proclaim what is locked deep in man's heart. There is no more solace on earth—no hope except the grave!"

Then the glass ball began to swing back and forth; a melodic sound like the wind slipping through the strings of a harp could be heard. Soon the sound changed to words:

Life is not yet on the wane.
Solace, hope you still can find.
What can pious thought attain
When an oath has bound the mind?
Master! Courage! You will find
Prayer to Mary is not vain.
She it is who wounds can bind.
Bitter sorrow brings you gain.

"Merciful Heaven," whispered the old man with trembling lips, "it is she herself who is speaking to me from Heaven; she is no longer in the land of the living!" Then that melodic sound was heard again, and more softly and remote the words echoed:

Pallid death will never seize
Those whose love is radiant fair.
Evening red will glow for these
Who at morn did quite despair.
You will soon be saved from care,
What the hour will bring will please.
What the eternal powers declare,
You may dare perform with ease.

Now swelling louder, now fading away, the sweet sounds lured sleep, who wrapped the old man in his black wings. But in the dark the dream of past happiness rose like a beautiful star and Chiara lay once more on the Meister's breast and both were young and blissful and no dark spirit was able to trouble the heaven of their love.

The editor must now inform the gentle reader that the cat has again torn out several pages, so that in this story full of gaps, there are more gaps. But according to the page numbers, only eight columns are missing, which do not seem to have contained anything very important, since what follows seems to belong pretty well to what has just been related. The story continues thus:

—was not to be expected. Fürst Irenäus was a sworn enemy of any unusual occurrences, especially when his own person was involved in investigating the matter. He therefore took a double pinch of snuff, as he was accustomed to in critical situations, stared at the gamekeeper with his well-known Frederick the Great look, and said, "Lebrecht, I think we are a somnambulistic dreamer and are seeing ghosts and making a quite useless fuss."

"Your Serene Highness," replied the gamekeeper quite composed, "you may drive me away like an ordinary rascal if everything that I have told you is not literally true. I repeat it firmly and boldly: Rupert is a complete rascal."

"What," cried the Fürst in a great rage, "what, Rupert, my loyal old steward, who has served the royal house for fifty years without ever letting a lock rust or stick when locking or unlocking

—he is supposed to be a rascal? Lebrecht! You are crazy! You are insane! Hell and—"

The Fürst hesitated as he always did when he caught himself swearing, since it was contrary to all royal behavior. The gamekeeper used the moment to interrupt quickly, "Your Serene Highness should not get so heated and swear so frightfully, and one cannot keep silent about such a matter; one can only tell the truth."

"Who is heated," said the Fürst more relaxed, "who is swearing? Idiots swear! I want you to repeat the whole matter briefly so that I can present it to a secret meeting of my councillors for thorough discussion and decision about the measures to be taken. If Rupert is really a rascal, then— Well, we will see what is to be done."

"As I told you," began the gamekeeper, "when I was lighting the way for Fräulein Julia last evening, the same person who has been sneaking around here for a long time crept by us. 'Stop,' I thought to myself, 'you will catch the Urian';[5] and after I had brought Julia back, I extinguished my torch and stationed myself in the dark. It was not long before the same person came out of the shrubbery and knocked softly on the door. I crept up cautiously. The door was opened and a girl stepped out and the strange man slipped in with this same girl. It was Nanny. You know her, Your Serene Highness, the Rätin's pretty Nanny?"

"Coquin," cried the Fürst, "one does not speak with crowned heads of pretty Nannis! Continue, *mon fils.*"

"Yes," continued the gamekeeper, "yes, the pretty Nanni. I would never have thought her capable of such a business. Nothing more than a simple love affair, I thought to myself; but I could not believe that there wasn't something else back of it all. I stayed near the house. After quite a while, the Rätin came back; and she had scarcely entered the house when a window upstairs was opened and the strange man leaped out with unbelievable agility, right into the lovely carnations and stocks which are by the trellis and which Fräulein Julia cares for herself. The gardener is lamenting frightfully; he is down there now with the smashed flower pots and was about to bring a complaint himself to Your Serene Highness. But I did not let him come in because that rascal is already drunk this early in the morning."

5. A seventeenth-century epithet for a devil or a guest.

"Lebrecht," the Fürst interrupted the gamekeeper, "Lebrecht, your story seems to be a plagiarism, for the same thing happens in the opera by Herr Mozart, called *The Marriage of Figaro,* which I saw in Prague. Stick to the truth, gamekeeper!"

"I am not," continued Lebrecht, "I am not saying a word that I cannot confirm with an oath. The fellow had fallen down, and I thought I could capture him now; but quick as a flash he picked himself up and dashed right off—where? Where do you think, Your Serene Highness, he ran to?"

"I do not think," replied the Fürst solemnly. "Do not bother me with tiresome questions about my thoughts, gamekeeper, but just continue with the story until it is over, and then I will think."

"The man ran," continued the gamekeeper, "the man ran right to the uninhabited pavilion. Yes—uninhabited! As soon as he knocked on the door, a light went on inside, and the man who came out was none other than the nice, honorable Herr Rupert, whom the stranger followed into the house, which was locked again firmly. You see, Your Serene Highness, that Rupert has dealings with strange, dangerous visitors, who certainly have bad intentions with all this sneaking around. Who knows what the intent is, and it is possible that even Your Serene Highness is being threatened by evil men in quiet, peaceful Sieghartshof."

Since Fürst Irenäus considered himself a very important royal person, it was inevitable that he often dreamed of all sorts of court intrigues and wicked ambushes. The gamekeeper's last remark fell, therefore, heavily on his heart, and he became absorbed in thought for several minutes. "Gamekeeper," he then said with eyes wide open, "gamekeeper, you are right. The affair of the strange man who sneaks around here, of the light that is seen at night in the pavilion, is more serious than appeared at first. My life is in God's hands! But loyal servants surround me, and if one of them should sacrifice himself for me, I would quite certainly remember his family generously! Spread that around among my people, my dear Lebrecht! You know, a royal heart is free of all anxiety, of all human fear of death; but one has his obligations to his people, one must conserve himself for them, especially when the heir to the throne is still a minor. Therefore, I will not leave the castle until the intrigue in the pavilion is destroyed. The head forester is to come with all the foresters and other forest servants; all my people are to arm themselves. The pavilion is to be sur-

rounded immediately, and the castle tightly locked up. Arrange all that, my dear Lebrecht. I myself will put on my hunting knife, and you must load my brace of pistols; but do not forget to leave on the safety catch so that no mishap occurs. And bring me the news when the room in the pavilion is taken by storm and the conspirators are forced to surrender, so that I can retire to my official chamber. And search the prisoners carefully before they are brought before the throne, in case one of them from despair—but what are you standing there for? Why are you smiling at me? What does that mean, Lebrecht?"

"Oh," replied the gamekeeper with a sly look, "oh, Your Serene Highness, I only mean that it is not necessary to order up the forester with his people."

"Why not?" asked the Fürst angrily. "Why not? I really think you presume to contradict me. And the danger mounts with every second! Hell and— Lebrecht, leap on a horse—the forester—his men—loaded rifles—they are to come at once."

"They are," said the gamekeeper, "they are already here, Your Serene Highness!"

"How—what!" cried the Fürst, opening his mouth wide to give vent to his astonishment.

"As soon as," continued the gamekeeper, "as soon as morning dawned, I went out to the forester. The pavilion is already so carefully surrounded that a cat could not get out, much less a man."

"You are," said the Fürst touched, "you are an excellent gamekeeper, Lebrecht, and a loyal servant of the royal house. If you save me from this danger, you can count on a service medal which I will invent myself and have coined of silver or gold depending on how many men are left after the storming of the pavilion."

"If you will permit it," said the gamekeeper, "if you will permit it, Your Serene Highness, we will get right to work. That is, we will break in the pavilion doors, capture the rogues that are living in it, and everything will be over. Yes, yes, I'll catch that fellow who has so often escaped me, who is such a blasted jumper, that damned fellow, who has established himself in the pavilion as an uninvited guest, that rogue who has upset Fräulein Julia!"

"What rogue," asked Rätin Benzon as she came into the room, "what rogue has upset Julia? What are you talking about, my dear Lebrecht?" The Fürst walked toward Benzon solemnly, importantly, like someone faced with something tremendous, some-

thing enormous which he is trying with all his might to endure. He took her hand, pressed it tenderly and spoke in a gentle voice.

"Benzon! Danger pursues the royal head even into the loneliest retreat. It is the sovereigns' lot that mildness and goodness cannot protect them from the hostile demon who inflames jealousy and lust for power in the breasts of treasonous vassals! Benzon, the blackest treachery has raised its serpentine Medusa head against me; you find me in extreme danger! The catastrophic moment will soon arrive; perhaps I will owe my life, my throne to this loyal man! And if fate has decided otherwise—well, I will submit to my fate. I know, Benzon, that you will keep your opinion of me; and so I can cry high-mindedly, as did that king in the tragedy by a German poet, with which Princess Hedwiga recently ruined my tea, 'Nothing is lost, for you remain mine!'[6] Kiss me, dear Benzon! Dear Amalie, we are and remain the same old ones! Good Lord, I am babbling in my fright! Let us be composed, my love. When the traitors are captured, I will destroy them with one glance. Gamekeeper, let the attack on the pavilion begin." The gamekeeper was about to rush out.

"Stop," cried Benzon, "what kind of an attack? On which pavilion?"

At the command of the Fürst, the gamekeeper had to repeat the exact account of the whole incident.

Benzon seemed to become more and more interested in the gamekeeper's tale. When he had ended, Benzon laughed, "That is the funniest misunderstanding that there could be. I beg you, Your Grace, to send away the forester with his men at once. There is no conspiracy, you are not in the least danger, Your Grace! The unknown inhabitant of the pavilion is already your prisoner."

"Who," asked the Fürst amazed, "who, what unfortunate man inhabits the pavilion without my permission?"

"It is," Benzon whispered in the Fürst's ear, "it is Prince Hektor who is hiding in the pavilion!"

The Fürst recoiled a few steps as if struck by an invisible hand, then he cried, "Who? How? *Est-il possible?* Benzon, am I dreaming? Prince Hektor?" The Fürst's glance fell on the gamekeeper, who was standing there stunned, twisting his hat in his hands. "Gamekeeper!" the Fürst screamed at him, "Gamekeeper, get out of here! The forester and his men must go away! No one is to be

6. Schiller, *Jungfrau von Orleans,* I, iv, 604.

seen! Benzon," he turned to the Rätin, "my dear Benzon, can you imagine, Lebrecht called Prince Hektor a fellow, a rascal! The unfortunate man! But that is just between you and me. It is a state secret. Just tell me, explain to me why the Prince pretended to leave and stayed here in hiding as if he were having an adventure?"

Benzon saw herself saved from a great embarrassment by the gamekeeper's observations. Although she had been absolutely convinced that it would not be advisable for her to reveal to the Fürst the Prince's presence in Sieghartshof and his attempted attack on Julia, the affair could not continue on a course that was becoming more and more threatening to Julia and to the whole structure which she, Benzon, was trying hard to maintain. Now, since the gamekeeper had spied out the Prince's hiding place and the latter ran the danger of being dragged out into the open in a not very honorable way, she could betray him without sacrificing Julia. Therefore she explained to the Fürst that it was probably a lover's quarrel with the Princess Hedwiga that had decided the Prince to pretend to leave and then to hide with his trusty valet near his beloved. It could not be denied that this action contained fictional and adventurous elements, but what lover has not been inclined that way? Incidentally, the Prince's valet was an eager lover of her Nanni, from whom she had learned the secret.

"Ha!" cried the Fürst, "thank heaven it was the valet and not the Prince himself who stole into your house and then jumped out of the window into the flower pots, like the page Cherubin.[7] All sorts of unpleasant thoughts were occurring to me. A Prince, and jumping through the window—how in the world could that be reconciled!"

"Indeed," replied Benzon laughing roguishly, "I know a royal person who did not disdain to leave by a window when—"

"You," the Fürst interrupted the Rätin, "you make me cross, Benzon; you make me uncommonly cross! Let us not speak of past affairs, let us rather consider what we should now do with the Prince. Diplomacy, all constitutional laws, all royal laws are no damned use in this situation! Should I ignore him? Should I find him accidentally? Should I—should I? My head is spinning like a top. That is what happens when crowned heads demean themselves to play eccentric, fanciful games."

Benzon really did not know how to shape the further rela-

7. In *The Marriage of Figaro.*

tionship with the Prince. But she was helped out of this embarrassment. Before the Rätin could answer the Fürst, the old steward Rupert came in and handed the Fürst a small, folded note, assuring him with a roguish smile that it came from a person of high estate whom he had the honor of keeping under lock and key not far from here. "You knew," said the Fürst very graciously to the old man, "you knew, Rupert, that? Well, I have always considered you an honorable, loyal servant of my house, and you have just proved yourself one now, since you obeyed the command of my sublime son-in-law, as was your duty. I will consider your reward." Rupert expressed his thanks with the humblest expressions and retired from the room.

It is often the way in life that one is considered particularly honorable and virtuous just at the moment when he has performed a piece of knavery. This occurred to Benzon, who was better informed of the Prince's evil intentions and was convinced that the old, hypocritical Rupert was involved in the evil secret.

The Furst opened the letter and read:

Che dolce più, che più giocondo stato
Saria, di quel d'un amoroso core?
Che viver più felice e più beato,
Che ritrovarsi in servitù d'Amore
Se non fosse l'huom sempre stimulato
Da quel sospetto rio, da quel timore,
Da quel martir, da quella frenesia,
Da quella rabbia, detta gelosia.[8]

In these lines of a great poet you will find, my Fürst, the cause of my mysterious actions. I believed myself not loved by the one I adored, who is my life, all my longing and hope, for whom an ardent passion burns in my inflamed breast. Happy me! I am persuaded otherwise; I have known for a couple of hours that I am loved and I am emerging from my hiding place. Love and happiness—let those be the passwords which announce me. Soon I will greet you, my Fürst, with a son's respect.

Hektor

8. Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso,* strophe 1, canto 31. The translation which appears a few lines further along in the story is by Sir John Harrington (*Orlando Furioso,* ed. Graham Hough [Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962]).

Perhaps it will not be completely displeasing to the gentle reader if the biographer lets the story rest for a couple of seconds and inserts an attempt at a translation of that Italian poem. It would be approximately as follows:

> What state of life more pleasing may we find,
> Than theirs, that true and hearty love do beare?
> Whom that sweet yoke doth fast together bind,
> That man in Paradise first learn'd to weare:
> Were not some so tormented in their mind,
> With that same vile suspect, that filthy feare,
> That torture great, that foolish frenesie,
> That raging madnesse, called jealousie.

The Fürst read the note two or three times very carefully, and the more he read it, the deeper grew the furrows on his forehead. "Benzon," he said finally, "Benzon! What is the matter with the Prince? A poem, an Italian poem to a royal head, to a crowned father-in-law, instead of a clear and reasonable explanation? What does it mean? There is no meaning in it. The Prince seems to be eccentric in a quite unsuitable way. The poem speaks, in so far as I understand it, of the happiness of love and the pains of jealousy. What has the Prince to do with jealousy? Of whom, for heaven's sake, can he be jealous? Tell me, dear Benzon, do you find the least spark of sensible meaning in the Prince's letter?"

Benzon was alarmed by the deeper meaning which lay in the Prince's words and which she could easily guess after what had happened in her house yesterday. At the same time she had to admire the way the Prince had contrived to emerge from his hiding place without further scandal. Without the least intention of even hinting this to the Fürst, she tried to extract as much advantage from the situation for herself as possible. It was Kreisler and Meister Abraham who she feared would upset her secret plans, and she thought she would have to use every weapon which chance would put in her hand. She reminded the Fürst of what she had told him about the passion that had flared in the Princess's breast. She added that the Princess's mood could have as little escaped the Prince's perspicacity as Kreisler's strange, neurotic behavior must have given him cause to assume an insane relationship between the two of them. Thus it was sufficiently explained why the Prince had pursued Kreisler to the death, why he, when he believed he had killed

Kreisler, had kept away from the Princess in her pain and despair, but then, when he was informed that Kreisler was alive, driven by love and longing, had returned and observed the Princess secretly. The jealousy that the Prince's poem was talking about could only have been aimed at Kreisler, and it was all the more necessary and advisable not to allow Kreisler at Sieghartshof any more, since he seemed to have forged a plot with Meister Abraham directed against the court.

"Benzon," said the Fürst very seriously, "Benzon, I have thought about what you have told me of the Princess's unworthy inclination, and I do not believe a word of it. Royal blood courses in the Princess's veins."

"Do you believe," continued Benzon urgently, blushing to her eyes, "do you believe, Your Grace, that the royal woman can command her pulse, the inner artery of her life, as no other can?"

"You are," said the Fürst crossly, "you are in a very strange mood today, Rätin! I repeat, if any tasteless passion arose in the Princess's heart, it was only a morbid accident—a cramp, you might say—she suffers from spasms—from which she would quite quickly recover. As for Kreisler, he is an amusing person who simply lacks proper culture. I do not think he is capable of such presumption as wanting to approach the Princess. He is impudent, but in a quite different way. You may be sure, Benzon, that precisely because of his eccentric ways, a Princess would not be happy with him, even if it were conceivable that such a high person could condescend to be in love with him. For—Benzon, *entre nous soit dit*—he does not have much of an opinion of us crowned heads, and that is the ridiculous, tasteless foolishness which makes him unsuitable to linger at court. Let him stay away, but if he should return, I would welcome him heartily. Not only that he, as I learned from Meister Abraham—yes, Meister Abraham—you may keep out of this, Benzon. The plots that he has forged have always been concerned with the weal of the royal house. What was I talking about? Yes, not enough that the Kapellmeister, as Meister Abraham told me, had to flee in an unsuitable manner, although I had accepted him in a friendly way; he is and always will be a very clever man who amuses me in spite of his foolish manner, *et cela suffit!*"

The Rätin was immobilized by rage at seeing herself so coldly dismissed. Without suspecting it, she had crashed on a hidden rock when she thought she was happily riding down the stream.

A tremendous racket arose in the palace yard. A procession of carriages came rattling in, accompanied by a squadron of Grand Ducal Hussars. The Court Chamberlain, the President, the royal Councillors, several people of the upper classes from Sieghartsweiler were arriving. The news had spread that a revolution aimed at the Fürst's life had broken out in Sieghartshof, and now the loyal men and other admirers of the court had come to place themselves around the person of the Fürst and had brought with them the defenders of the fatherland, whom they had obtained with difficulty from the commandant.

The Fürst was quite unable to speak because of their protestations that they were ready to sacrifice life and limb for their Serene Highness. He was about to begin, when the officer who commanded the squadron entered and asked the Fürst for the plan of operation.

It is human nature that when the danger which frightens us dissolves into thin air before our eyes that we are filled with ill-humor. The thought of having happily escaped real danger, not that there never was any, is what makes us happy.

And so the Fürst could scarcely suppress his irritation at the unnecessary tumult.

Could he say that the whole noise was about a tryst between a valet and a maid, about the fanciful jealousy of a prince in love? He thought and thought; the ominous silence in the hall, interrupted only by the neighing of the hussars' horses waiting outside, weighed on him like lead.

Finally he cleared his throat and began very solemnly, "Gentlemen! Heaven's marvelous providence— What do you want, *mon ami?*"

The Fürst interrupted himself, directing this question at the Court Chamberlain. The Court Chamberlain had really bowed several times and given him to understand by his expression that he had something important to say. It turned out that Prince Hektor had just asked to be announced.

The Fürst's face cleared; he saw that he could be very brief about the supposed danger in which his throne had hovered and could transform the honorable gathering by a touch of magic into a court of welcome. That is what he did!

It was not long before Prince Hektor came in, splendidly attired in a dress uniform, handsome, powerful, proud, like a young

god come from afar. The Fürst took a few steps toward him, but then recoiled as if struck by lightning. Prince Ignatius sprang into the hall right behind Prince Hektor. The royal gentleman was unfortunately becoming daily more demoniacal and absurd. The hussars in the courtyard must have pleased him uncommonly, for he had persuaded one of them to give him a sabre, satchel, and shako and had clothed himself in these marvels. He galloped around the room as if he were on horseback, his bare sword in his fist, the iron sheath rattling on the floor, and laughed and giggled gaily. *"Partez—decampez! Allez-vous-en. Tout de suite,"* the Fürst cried with glowing eyes and in a thundering voice to the frightened Ignatius, who hastily vanished.

No one present had so little tact as to notice Prince Ignatius or the whole scene.

The Fürst now spoke a few words with the Prince in the full radiance of his former mildness and friendliness, and then they both walked around the circle of those assembled and spoke a few words with this one and that one. The reception was over; i.e., the witty, thoughtful remarks that are spoken at such occasions were properly made, and the Fürst went with the Prince to the chambers of the Fürstin and then, since the Prince insisted on surprising his beloved fiancée, into the Princess's chambers. They found Julia with her.

With the speed of the most ardent lover, the Prince flew to the Princess, pressed her hand a hundred times tenderly to his lips, swore that he lived only in the thought of her, that an unfortunate misunderstanding had made him suffer the torments of hell, that he could endure no longer the separation from the one he worshipped, and that all the bliss of heaven was now revealed to him.

Hedwiga received the Prince with an open serenity that was not inherent in her. She accepted the Prince's tender caresses, as an engaged girl may without compromising herself; she even teased the Prince a little about his hiding place and assured him that she could not imagine a nicer or more amusing transformation than that of a wig-stick into a Prince's head, for she had thought that the head she had seen in the window of the pavilion was a wig-stick. This occasioned all sorts of teasing of the happy couple, which even seemed to amuse the Fürst. He was now convinced of Benzon's error in regard to Kreisler, for Hedwiga's love of this most handsome of men seemed to be obvious enough. The Prin-

cess's mind and body seemed to be in a rare blossoming as is the quite special case with happy brides. It was quite the reverse with Julia. As soon as she saw the Prince, she began to tremble, seized by an inner horror. Pale as death, she stood with her eyes cast down, incapable of movement, scarcely able to remain upright.

After quite a while, the Prince turned to Julia with these words, "Fräulein Benzon, if I am not mistaken?"

"The friend of the Princess, since her earliest childhood—like sisters!" As the Fürst said these words, the Prince took Julia's hand and whispered to her very softly, "It is only you that I mean!" Julia swayed, tears of bitterest fear trickled out from under her lashes; she would have fallen if the Princess had not quickly pushed a chair over for her.

"Julia," said the Princess softly as she bent over the poor girl, "Julia, pull yourself together! Can't you guess the difficult battle I am fighting?" The Fürst opened the door and called for some *eau de luce.*

"That," said Meister Abraham as he came in, "that I do not keep on me, but there is good, fresh air. Has anyone fainted? Air is very helpful."

"Come quickly," replied the Fürst, "come quickly, Meister Abraham, and help Fraülein Julia."

But just as Meister Abraham came into the room, something unexpected occurred.

Pale as a ghost, Prince Hektor stared at the Meister; his hair seemed to stand on end, cold sweat appeared on his forehead. With one foot forward, his body bent back, his arms stretched out toward the Meister, he resembled Macbeth when Banquo's horrible, bloody ghost fills the empty place at dinner. The Meister calmly took out his flask and was about to approach Julia.

Then the Prince seemed to come to life again. "Severino, is it really you?" the Prince cried in a hollow tone of horror.

"To be sure," replied Meister Abraham, losing none of his composure or even changing his expression. "To be sure. I am glad that you remember me, Your Grace; I had the honor of doing you a small favor several years ago in Naples."

The Meister took another step forward; then the Prince seized him by the arm, pulled him violently aside, and there followed a short conversation which no one in the room understood, as it was spoken quickly and in the Neapolitan dialect.

"Severino! How did that man get hold of the picture?"

"I gave it to him as a talisman against you."

"Does he know?"

"No!"

"Will you be silent?"

"For the time being—yes!"

"Severino! What do you mean, for the time being?"

"As long as you behave yourself and leave Kreisler alone and also that girl over there."

The Prince now let go of the Meister and walked over to a window. Meanwhile Julia had recovered. Looking at Meister Abraham with an indescribable expression of anguish, she whispered more than she spoke, "Oh my dear, good Meister, you could save me— couldn't you? You have power over so many things. Your skill can still make everything turn out all right!" The Meister perceived in Julia's words the most amazing connection with the other conversation, as if she understood everything with a dreamer's sublime perception and knew the whole secret!

"You are," the Meister whispered softly in Julia's ear, "you are a holy angel, and therefore the dark hellish spirit of sin has no power over you. Trust yourself to me completely; fear nothing and compose yourself with all the power of your spirit. Remember, too, our Johannes."

"Ah," cried Julia sorrowfully, "ah, Johannes! He will return, won't he, Meister? I will see him again!"

"Certainly," replied the Meister and put his finger to his lips. Julia understood him.

The Prince tried to appear unconstrained. He related that the man who, as he heard, was here called Meister Abraham, had been witness to a very tragic occurrence several years ago in Naples, in which he, the Prince, had been involved, as he must confess. It was not yet the time to tell about this occurrence, but he would reveal it at some future time.

His inner turmoil was too violent for its raging to remain without any trace on his features, and so the Prince's agitated face, seemingly drained of all blood, harmonized badly with the casual chatter which he forced himself to utter to get through the critical moment. The Princess succeeded better than the Prince in conquering the tension. With an irony which sublimated suspicion and bitterness to the finest mockery, Hedwiga pursued the Prince

in the labyrinth of his own thoughts. He, the suavest worldling, armed with all the weapons of profligacy, the destroyer of everything genuine, every form of life, was unable to withstand this strange being. The more vivaciously Hedwiga chattered, the more violently and heatedly the flashes of witty mockery struck, the more confused and worried the Prince seemed to feel, until this feeling became intolerable and he departed quickly.

The Fürst felt as he usually did on such occasions; he did not know at all what he should think about it. He contented himself with uttering a few scraps of meaningless French, which he tossed off to the Prince, who replied in kind.

The Prince was already out the door when Hedwiga suddenly changed completely, stared at the floor, and cried loudly in a strange tone that cut to the heart, "I see the murderer's bloody track!" Then she seemed to awaken from a dream, clasped Julia stormily to her bosom, and whispered to her, "Child, my poor child, do not be deluded!"

"Secrets," said the Fürst with irritation, "secrets, delusions, absurdities, games! *Ma foi,* I don't know my court any more! Meister Abraham, you fix my clocks when they don't run properly; I wish you could investigate here and see what damage has been done to the clockworks which have never broken down before. But what is all that about Severino?"

"Under this name," replied the Meister, "I performed my optical and mechanical tricks in Naples."

"So—so," said the Fürst; then he stared at the Meister as if a question were hovering on his lips, turned around quickly, and left the room in silence.

It was thought that Benzon was with the Fürstin, but she was not; she had gone back to her own dwelling.

Julia longed for fresh air. The Meister led her into the park, and strolling along the walks half bare of leaves, they spoke of Kreisler and his visit to the Abbey. They had come to the little fisherman's hut. Julia entered in order to rest. Kreisler's letter was lying on the table; the Meister did not think there was anything in it that Julia would dread hearing.

As Julia read the letter, her cheeks flushed scarlet, and a gentle fire, the reflection of a brightened frame of mind, glowed in her eyes.

"You see," said the Meister in a friendly way, "you see, my

child, how the good spirit of my Johannes speaks to you comfortingly from a distance? What fearful deeds need you fear when steadfastness, love, and courage protect you from the evil people who pursue you!"

"Merciful Heaven," cried Julia, glancing upward, "just protect me from myself!" She trembled in sudden fright at these words which she had unconsciously uttered. Half fainting, she sank into a chair and covered her burning face with her hands.

"I do not," said the Meister, "I do not understand you, girl; perhaps you do not understand yourself, and therefore you should search your mind thoroughly and not conceal anything just to spare yourself."

The Meister left Julia to her thoughts, and with arms crossed looked up at the mysterious glass globe. Then his heart swelled with longing and strange presentiment.

"You," said he, "you I must indeed ask, I must consult with you, you beautiful, marvelous secret of my life. Do not be silent, let your voice be heard! You know that I was never a common person, although many thought I was. In me glowed the infinite love, which is the eternal world itself, and the spark glowed in my heart which the breath of your being fanned to a bright, happy flame. Do not think, Chiara, that because my heart has grown older that it is frozen and can no longer beat as quickly as at that time when I snatched you away from that inhuman Severino. Do not think that I am less worthy of you now than I was when you sought me out! Yes! Let me hear your voice, and with the speed of a boy I will pursue the sound until I have found you, and then we will live together again and practice the higher magic which everybody, even the most common people, though not believing in it, are forced to acknowledge. And if you no longer wander here on earth, if your voice is speaking to me from the spirit world, I will still be content and will still become a better fellow than I ever was. But, no, no! What were the comforting words that you spoke to me?

Pale death will never seize
Those whose love is radiant fair.
Evening red will glow for these
Who at morn did quite despair.

"Meister!" cried Julia, who had gotten up from her chair and listened to the old man in the deepest surprise. "Meister! With

whom are you speaking? What are you doing? You said the name Severino; good Heavens! Didn't the Prince call you that name when he had recovered from his horror? What fearful secret is hidden here?"

At these words of Julia, the old man came out of that exalted state for a moment, and there spread on his face, as it had not occurred for a long time, that strange, almost smirking friendliness, which was such a contradiction to his usual openness and gave his whole appearance a touch of mysterious caricature.

"My dear young lady," he said in that shrill tone which market sellers usually use to call their wares, "my dear young lady, just be patient. I will soon have the honor of showing you the most amazing things. These little dancing men, the little Turk who knows how old everybody present is, these automatons, these palingenetists, these distorted pictures, these optical mirrors—all lovely, magical toys; but I am still missing the best one. My Invisible Maiden is there! Do you see? She is sitting up there in the glass globe. But she does not yet talk; she is still tired from her long journey, for she has just come direct from distant India. In a few days, my dear young lady, my Invisible Maiden will arrive, and then we will ask her about Prince Hektor, about Severino and other events of the past and the future. For now, just a few little simple amusements."

The Meister jumped around the room with the speed and liveliness of a boy, started the machines, and arranged the magic mirrors. And in all the corners there was life and activity. The automatons strode around and turned their heads, an artificial rooster flapped its wings and crowed, and parrots shrieked, while Julia herself and the Meister stood outside. Julia felt a horror at the Meister's strange mood, although she was used to such games. "Meister," she said, quite frightened, "Meister, what is the matter with you?"

"Child," replied the Meister in his serious manner, "child, something beautiful and wonderful, but it is not right that you should learn about it. Let these mechanical things finish their tricks while I confide in you as much as is necessary and useful for you to know. My dear Julia, your own mother has kept her heart locked up from you. I wish to open it for you so that you may look inside and recognize the danger in which you hover and will be able to escape it. First, you must learn, without any more

digressions, that your mother has decided nothing less than—"

(M.c.)—rather let it go. Youthful cats, be modest as I am and not always ready with a poem when simple, honest prose will do to spin out your thoughts. Poems should do for prose what lard does for sausage; namely, they should be sprinkled through to give the whole mishmash more glistening fat, more sweetness of taste. I am not afraid that my poetic colleagues will find my metaphor too common and ignoble, since it is taken from our favorite food; and actually a good poem can be as serviceable to an average novel as a fat bit of lard to a scrawny sausage. I say this as a cat of esthetic education and experience. However much Ponto's whole relationship, his way of life, and his method of keeping in his master's favor had seemed to me to be philosophically and morally unworthy, a little wretched, still, his easy manner, his elegance, his frank gaiety in society had infected me. With all my strength I tried to convince myself that with my intellectual training, with my seriousness of purpose, I had attained a much higher level than the ignorant Ponto, who had only here and there snapped up a piece of knowledge. But a certain feeling that could not be suppressed told me quite candidly that Ponto would put me in the shade anywhere. I felt constrained to acknowledge the existence of a more aristocratic class than myself and to reckon the poodle Ponto in this class.

A gifted person like me always has peculiar thoughts on every occasion and with every experience, and thus I made all sorts of observations about my emotions and my whole relationship to Ponto that are probably worth imparting. "How does it happen," I said to myself, while thoughtfully placing my paw on my forehead, "how does it happen that great poets, great philosophers, otherwise so intelligent and practical, are so helpless in their social relationships with the so-called aristocratic world? They are always standing around where they don't belong; they speak when they should be silent and, in reverse, are silent just when a word is needed; they offend the structure of society as it is constituted by their contrary actions, and wound themselves and others. In short, they resemble the person who, just when a whole group of happy walkers are harmoniously strolling out the gate, forces his way in through the gate and, pursuing his way boisterously, disturbs the whole line of people. I know, one ascribes this to a lack

of social culture, which cannot be attained at the writing table; but I think that this culture must be quite easy to acquire and that that incurable clumsiness must have some other cause. He would not be a great poet or philosopher if he did not feel his spiritual superiority; but similarly he would have to possess that deep feeling that belongs to every intelligent man to realize that this superiority may not be acknowledged because it destroys the equilibrium, the maintenance of which is the chief aim of so-called aristocratic society. Every voice may interrupt the perfect harmony of the whole; but the poet's tone is dissonant and is a bad tone, even though it can be a good one under different circumstances, because it does not fit into the whole structure. Good tone, like good taste, consists in the omission of everything that is unsuitable. I also think that the irritation that arises from the conflicting feeling of superiority and a clumsy manner prevents the poet or philosopher who lacks experience in the social world from recognizing the whole structure and being superior to it. It is necessary for the moment for him not to rate his inner, spiritual superiority too high; and if he does not, then he will also not rate too high the so-called socially higher culture which is only concerned with smoothing out all corners and sharp edges and in shaping all physiognomies to a single one which then ceases to be one. Then, freed of that irritation, he will easily recognize the inner nature of this culture and the wretched premises on which it rests and by this recognition find a home in this strange world, which precisely this culture considers indispensable. It is a special case with artists such as poets and writers, whom the aristocrat occasionally invites into his circle in order to bestow a kind of patronage according to ancient custom. Unfortunately, something of the craftsman sticks to these artists, and therefore they are either obsequious or boorishly ill-mannered.

(*Editor's note:* I am sorry, Murr, that you so frequently deck yourself with false feathers. This will rightly lose you the sympathy of the gentle readers, I fear. Do not all these comments, with which you are giving yourself airs, come straight from the mouth of the Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler; and could you possibly have attained such wisdom that you can see so deeply into a writer's soul, the most curious thing in the world?)

Why, I thought, couldn't an intelligent cat, if he too is a poet, a writer, an artist, succeed in achieving that understanding of

higher culture in all its ramifications, and practice it himself with beauty and grace? Has Nature blessed only the race of dogs with the prerogatives of culture? Even if we cats, in regard to dress, way of life, manners, and customs, are different from that proud race, we are still possessed of flesh and blood, body and spirit; and, after all, dogs are not able to exist in any different fashion than we do. Even dogs must eat, drink, sleep, etc., and they ache when they are beaten. What reasons more! I decided to take lessons from my young, aristocratic friend, the poodle Ponto; and having made up my mind, I returned to my master's room. One glance in the mirror convinced me that the mere determination to strive for higher culture had already had a beneficial effect on my appearance. I looked at myself with the deepest satisfaction. Is there a happier state than being completely satisfied with oneself? I purred!

The next day I was not content with just sitting by the door; I strolled along the street and saw in the distance Baron Alcibiades von Wipp, and behind him leaped my cheerful Ponto. I could not wish anything more opportune. I became as dignified as possible and approached my friend with that inimitable grace, that inestimable natural aptitude which no art can teach. But—frightful! What happened! As soon as the Baron saw me, he stopped and observed me carefully through his lorgnette and then cried, "*Allons*—Ponto! Hey! Hey! Cats! Cats!" And Ponto, my false friend, leaped at me furiously! Horrified, completely upset by this disgraceful betrayal, I was incapable of any defense, but flattened myself out to escape Ponto's sharp teeth, which he had bared. Ponto jumped over me several times without grabbing me and whispered in my ear, "Murr! Don't be a fool and be so scared! Can't you see that this isn't serious! I am only doing it to please my master!" Ponto repeated his jumping and pretended to seize me by my ears, without hurting me in the least. "Now," Ponto finally whispered to me, "scoot off, friend Murr—there—into the cellar window." He did not have to tell me that twice; I dashed off in a flash. In spite of Ponto's assurance that he was not going to hurt me, I was still not a little frightened, for in such critical cases one can never really know whether friendship is strong enough to conquer innate instincts.

After I had dashed into the cellar, Ponto continued the game which he had begun for his master's honor. He growled and barked by the cellar window, stuck his nose through the grating, and pre-

tended to be quite beside himself that I had escaped and he could not follow me. "Do you see," Ponto said to me while I was still in the cellar, "do you see, do you recognize again the beneficial results of higher culture? Right now I have shown myself obedient to my master without acquiring your enmity, my dear Murr. That is the way the true man of the world behaves, whom fate has destined to be a tool in the hand of a more powerful man. When incited, he must attack, but at the same time be so skillful that he really bites only when it also serves his own purposes." With all haste I revealed to my young friend Ponto that I had decided to profit from his higher culture and asked whether and in what way he could perhaps take me on as a pupil. Ponto thought about it for a few minutes and then said that it would be best if I immediately got a clear and vivid picture of the higher world in which he now had the pleasure of living, and this could not be better achieved than by my accompanying him that evening to charming Badine's house, who was having a party during the theater hour. Badine was a whippet in the service of the wife of the royal High Steward.

I dressed up as best I could, read a bit in Knigge,[9] and skimmed through a couple of new comedies by Picard[10] so that if necessary I could show that I was familiar with French, and then went down to the door. I did not have to wait long for Ponto. We strolled along the street in harmony and soon reached Badine's brightly lighted room, where I found a mixed gathering of poodles, spitzes, pugs, miniature lapdogs, and whippets, some sitting in a circle, some gathered in groups in a corner.

My heart beat not a little in this unknown company of naturally hostile persons. Many a poodle stared at me with a certain scornful surprise as if he wished to say, "What is a common cat doing among us sublime people?" Occasionally an elegant spitz snarled at me to let me know how gladly he would have attacked me if manners, dignity, and the good breeding of the guests had not ruled all violence inappropriate. Ponto rescued me from my embarrassment by introducing me to the lovely hostess, who assured me with charming condescension how delighted she was to have as guest a cat of my reputation. Now that Badine had spoken a few words with me, others paid me more attention with true doggy bon-

9. See chap. 1, note 23.

10. Louis Benoit Picard (1776–1828). His comedies, *The Parasite* and *The Uncle as Nephew,* were adapted by Schiller.

hommie, even spoke to me and commented on my writings that had entertained them at times. That flattered my vanity, and I scarcely noticed that they asked me questions without paying any attention to my answers, that they lauded my works without understanding them. A natural instinct taught me to reply in the same vein that I was questioned; namely, to give opinions briefly, without regard to the question asked, in such general statements that they could apply to anything at all and were not really opinions and never dragged the conservation from the surface down into the depths. Ponto assured me as he walked by that an old spitz had asserted that I was quite amusing for a cat and had a good talent for conservation. Something like that pleases even a sullen man!

When Jean Jacques Rousseau in his *Confessions* tells the story about the book that he stole, and about seeing a poor, innocent girl punished for the theft which he had committed, he admits how difficult it was for him to overcome this shallowness of his soul. I find myself in the same situation as that honored autobiographer. Even if I do not have a crime to confess, yet I wish to be truthful and not suppress the enormous foolishness that I committed that evening and which disturbed me for a long time afterward, even threatened my reason. Is it not just as difficult, even more difficult, to confess a foolishness than a crime?

It was not long before I felt so uncomfortable, so irritable, that I wished myself far away under my master's stove. The most frightful boredom oppressed me and finally caused me to forget all caution. I slipped quite quietly into a corner to yield to the sleepiness that was aroused in me by the conservation going on around me. That conversation, which I in my irritation perhaps mistakenly considered the dullest, most boring chatter, now sounded to me like the clattering of a windmill that puts one in the pleasant soporific state that precedes true sleep. While in this thoughtless brooding state, in this delicious delirium, it suddenly seemed to me as if a brilliant light suddenly flared up before my closed eyes. I looked up and right in front of me was a charming, snow-white whippet miss, Badine's lovely niece, called Minona, as I later discovered.

"Sir," said Minona in that sweet lisping tone which only too readily finds an echo in the easily aroused heart of fiery youth. "Sir, why are you sitting here all by yourself? You seem bored. I am sorry. But it is true that a serious poet like yourself, sir, hovering

in higher spheres, must find ordinary society dull and superficial."

I got up, a bit disconcerted, and I was sorry that my nature, more powerful than all theories of proper behavior, forced me, against my will, to arch my back, which seemed to make Minona smile.

Immediately adopting better manners, I seized Minona's paw, pressed it lightly to my lips, and spoke of the inspired moments to which a poet frequently succumbs. Minona listened to me with such evident signs of the deepest interest, with such reverence, that I rose to ever more profound poetry until I finally did not really understand myself. Minona probably did not understand me either, but she went into raptures and assured me that it had long been her greatest wish to meet the gifted Murr and that this was the happiest, the most wonderful moment of her life. What shall I say! It soon turned out that Minona had read my works—no! not only read, but comprehended their highest meaning. She knew several of them by heart and recited them with an enthusiasm, with a charm, which transported me into a whole heaven of poetry, especially since they were *my* poems which the most charming member of her race recited.

"My dearest," I cried, quite carried away, "my dearest, sweetest young lady! You have understood my soul! You have memorized my poems. Heavens above, is there a greater bliss for the struggling poet?"

"Murr," lisped Minona, "gifted cat, do you think that a sensitive heart, a poetically spiritual spirit could remain alienated from you?" Minona sighed deeply after these words, and this sigh finished me. What else could happen? I fell so thoroughly in love with the beautiful whippet that, quite blind and foolish, I did not notice that she suddenly stopped in the middle of her ravings to speak a lot of stupid nonsense with a little foppish pug, that she avoided me the rest of the evening, that she treated me in a way that should have let me clearly see that all her praise and enthusiasm was directed at herself. Suffice it to say I was a blind idiot, pursued the lovely Minona wherever I could, made songs about her in lovely poetry, made her the heroine of many a charmingly crazy story, forced my way into parties where I did not belong, and reaped in return much bitter vexation, ridicule, and insult.

Frequently in sober moments I myself could see the foolishness of my actions; but then again I would think of Tasso and many

other, recent poets with a chivalrous outlook who are devoted to a great lady, to whom they direct their songs and whom they worship from afar as the man of Mancha his Dulcine; and I did not wish to be less poetical than the latter and swore eternal loyalty and chivalrous service to the death to my love image, the charming white whippet. Having once been captivated by this illusion, I did one foolish thing after another; and even my friend Ponto found it necessary to avoid me after he had seriously warned me of the evil mystifications in which everyone was trying to entangle me. Who knows what would have become of me if a kindly star had not guided me! My kindly star arranged that, late one night, I slipped over to lovely Badine's to see my beloved Minona. I found all the doors closed, and all my waiting in the hope of somehow slipping in was in vain. With my heart filled with love and desire, I was about to announce my presence to my beloved and began under her window one of the tenderest Spanish songs that was ever experienced and created. It must have been very mournful to hear!

I heard Badine barking; Minona's sweet voice also growled. Before I knew what was happening, the window was quickly opened and a whole bucket of ice-cold water was emptied on me. You can imagine with what speed I flew home. My inner fire and the ice water on my fur harmonized so badly that nothing good could come of it—at the least, only a fever. That is what happened to me. By the time I reached my master's house, I was shivering mightily with fever. My master guessed my illness from the paleness of my face, the dullness of my eyes, the heat of my forehead, and my irregular pulse. He gave me some warm milk, which I greedily drank, as my tongue was sticking to my palate from thirst. Then I wrapped myself up in my blanket and succumbed completely to the illness which had seized me. First I had all sorts of feverish dreams about aristocratic culture, whippets, etc.; later my sleep became calmer and finally so deep that I believe, without any exaggeration, that I slept for three days and three nights in a row.

When I finally awoke, I felt free and easy; I was completely cured of my fever and—how marvelous—also of my foolish love! The folly to which the poodle Ponto had lured me became quite clear to me; I realized how silly it was for me, a born cat, to mix with dogs who despised me because they were unable to appreciate my soul and who, because of the meaninglessness of their beings,

had to limit themselves to the form and could offer me nothing more than the shell without the kernel. The love of art and learning reawoke in me with renewed strength, and my master's domestic ways attracted me more than ever. The more mature, adult years began and, neither a cat *Bursch* nor a cultivated dandy, I felt vividly that one could not be both if one were to shape himself to the better and more important demands of life.

My master had to go on a journey, and he thought it a good idea to board me for a while with his friend, the Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler. Since a new period of my life begins with this change, I am concluding the present one now, from which you, oh kitten, have no doubt extracted many a good lesson.

(s.p.)—as if distant, hollow sounds were beating on his ear and he heard monks striding through the passageways. When Kreisler had fully roused himself from sleep, he saw from his window that the church was lighted and heard the murmuring singing of the choir. The midnight prayer was past, so something unusual must have occurred, and Kreisler rightly assumed that perhaps a sudden, unexpected death had carried off one of the old monks, who was now being carried into the church according to monastic custom. The Kapellmeister hastily threw on his clothes and went to the chapel. On the way he met Pater Hilarius, who, drunk with sleep, was swaying unsteadily, yawning loudly, incapable of walking firmly, and instead of holding his candle upright, was aiming it toward the ground so that the wax was dripping and threatening at any minute to extinguish the flame. "Your Grace," stammered Hilarius when Kreisler hailed him, "Your Grace, this violates all rules. *Exequien* at night—at this hour—and only because Brother Cyprianus insists on it! *Domine—libera nos de hoc monacho!*"[11]

The Kapellmeister finally succeeded in convincing the half-dreaming Hilarius that he was not the Abbot but Kreisler, and with difficulty he learned from him that the body of a stranger had been brought to the monastery during the night—from where, he did not know—and who the stranger was, only Brother Cyprianus seemed to know, but he could not have been an ordinary man since the Abbot agreed, at Ciprianus's urgent request, to hold the *exequien* immediately so that the body could be removed in the morning after the first prayers.

11. "Lord—deliver us from this monk!"

Kreisler followed the Pater into the chapel, which, only sparingly lighted, was a strange, gruesome sight. The candles of the large metal chandelier which hung from the high ceiling in front of the altar were burning, but the flickering glow scarcely lighted the nave of the chapel and cast mysterious bands of light in the side aisles, where the statues of the saints seemed to be moving as if awakened to a ghostly life. The open coffin in which the body lay had been placed in the brightest light under the chandelier, and the monks who surrounded it seemed pale and motionless, themselves dead men climbing out of their graves in the witching hour. With somber, hoarse voices they sang the monotonous verses of the requiem, and when they paused from time to time, one heard the ominous moaning of the night wind, and the tall windows of the chapel creaked strangely as if the spirits of the dead were rapping on the house in which they heard the holy mourning. Kreisler approached the rows of monks and recognized the dead man as Prince Hektor's adjutant.

Then the dark spirits who so often exerted their power over him stirred and raked his wounded heart mercilessly with their sharp claws.

"Mocking spirit," he spoke to himself, "are you driving me here so that that dead young man will bleed, because it is said that the corpse bleeds when the murderer approaches? Ho ho! Don't I know that he had to pour out all his blood during those terrible days when he was expiating his sins on a bed of fever? He does not have one evil drop left with which he could poison his murderer, even if he did come near him, least of all Johannes Kreisler; for he has nothing to do with the viper which he trod to death when it was sticking out its sharp tongue to inflict a mortal wound. Open your eyes, dead man, so that I can look you firmly in the eye, so that you will see that sin has nothing to do with me. But you cannot! Who commanded you to set a life against a life? Why did you play a deceptive game with murder and were not prepared to lose the game? But your features are gentle and good, you pale, quiet youth; the agony of death has erased every trace of damnable sin from your face, and I could almost say, if that were now suitable, that Heaven had opened the gates of mercy to you because there was love in your heart. But yet—what if I had been mistaken in you? If it was not you—not an evil demon—what if my lucky star raised your arm against me to snatch me from a dreadful fate that was

lying in wait for me in the black background? Well, you may open your eyes, pale youth, you may now with an expression of reconciliation reveal everything, and even if I founder in sadness for you or from the frightful fear that the black shadow which is creeping behind me is about to pounce upon me. Yes, look at me! But no, no, you might look at me like Leonhard Ettlinger; I could believe that you were he, and then you would have to descend to the depths with me from whence I often hear his hollow, ghostly voice. And yet, you smile? Your cheeks, your lips are getting pink? Did not death's weapon strike you? No, I will not struggle with you again, but—"

During this soliloquy, Kreisler, who had unconsciously dropped on one knee, resting both elbows on the other and his hands braced under his knee, leaped up suddenly and would certainly have done something strange and wild; but in that moment the monks became silent, and the choirboys intoned the *Salve regina,* accompanied softly by the organ. The coffin was closed and the monks strode solemnly away. The dark spirits released poor Johannes and, quite dissolved in melancholy and pain, with bowed head he followed the monks. He was about to go out the door when a figure in a dark corner rose and walked quickly up to him.

The monks stopped, and the full glow of their lights fell on a large, sturdy fellow who might have been eighteen or twenty years old. His face, which could not be called less than ugly, had an expression of wild defiance; his black hair hung untidily around his neck; the torn jerkin of gayly striped linen barely covered his nakedness; his matching sailor pants came only to his bare calves, so that his Herculean build was quite visible.

"You damned man! Who commanded you to murder my brother?" cried the boy so wildly that the chapel resounded, and he leaped like a tiger at Kreisler and seized him by the throat with a murderous grip.

But before Kreisler, who was horrified by the unexpected attack, could think of defending himself, Pater Cyprianus appeared beside him and spoke in a firm, commanding voice, "Giuseppo, vile, sinful man! What are you doing here? Where did you leave your old mother? Get out, immediately! Worthy Abbot, call the servants to throw this murderous fellow out of the monastery."

The fellow had immediately let go of Kreisler when Cyprianus appeared before him. "Now, now," he said crossly, "don't get

so excited just because someone wants his rights, holy man! I'm going of my own accord; the monastery servants don't have to chase me out." The fellow sprang quickly away through a door which someone had forgotten to lock and by which he had probably slipped into the chapel. The servants came, but there was no occasion to pursue the wretch in the dark of the night.

It lay in Kreisler's nature that precisely the tension that is created by extraordinary and mysterious events had a beneficial effect on his spirits, once he had victoriously overcome the momentary storm that had threatened to defeat him.

The Abbot, therefore, found Kreisler's serenity strange. The latter stood before him the following day and spoke of the devastating impression that the sight of the dead man, who had tried to murder him and whom he had killed in justified self-defense, had made on him under such strange circumstances.

"Neither," said the Abbot, "neither the Church nor earthly law can charge you, dear Johannes, with any culpable guilt in the death of that sinful person. But for a long time you will not be able to quiet the reproaches of your inner voice, which tells you that it would have been better to have fallen yourself than to have killed your assailant; and this shows that the sacrifice of one's own life is more pleasing to the eternal powers if its preservation can only be accomplished by a sudden, bloody deed. But for the moment let us not talk of this, as I have something more important to tell you.

"What mortal man can judge how the coming moment can change the shape of things? It was not long ago that I was firmly convinced that nothing could be more helpful for the salvation of your soul than for you to renounce the world and enter into our order. I am now of a different opinion and would advise you, although you have become very dear to me, to leave the Abbey very soon. Do not mistrust me, dear Johannes! Do not ask me why I submit to the will of one who threatens to destroy everything that I have created with such effort. You would need to be intimately initiated into the secrets of the Church to understand me, even if I wished to discuss with you the motives for my actions. But I can probably speak more freely with you than with any other. I must tell you that in the near future, living in the Abbey will not provide you with the beneficial quiet as formerly, that your deepest aspirations will receive a mortal blow, and that the monastery will

seem to you to be a sad, dreary prison. The entire monastic organization is changing; the freedom that was united with piety will end and the black spirit of monastic fanaticism will rule in these walls with relentless severity. Oh, my Johannes, your wonderful songs will no longer lift our souls to the highest reverence, the choir will be abolished, and soon nothing but monotonous responses muttered by the oldest brothers in their hoarse voices will be heard."

"And," asked Kreisler, "and all this will happen at the instigation of the foreign monk Cyprianus?"

"That is so," replied the Abbot almost mournfully, while he cast down his eyes. "That is so, my dear Johannes, and it is not my fault that it cannot be otherwise. But," the Abbot added after a short silence in an exalted, solemn tone, "but, everything that supports the firm structure and the splendor of the Church must be fostered, and no sacrifice is too great!"

"Who," said Kreisler with irritation, "who is the high and mighty saint who governs you and who by one word was able to get that murderous boy to let go of me?"

"You are," replied the Abbot, "you are, dear Johannes, entwined in a secret without quite knowing all of it. But soon you will learn more, perhaps more than I myself know, from Meister Abraham. Cyprianus, whom we still call our brother, is one of the chosen ones. He was deemed worthy to enter into a direct relationship with the eternal powers of Heaven, and we must revere the saint in him now. As to that audacious fellow who crept into the chapel during the *exequien* and attacked you murderously, he is a runaway, half-insane gypsy boy whom our governor has already had whipped several times because he stole fat chickens from the coops in the village. No special miracle was needed to get rid of him." As the Abbot spoke the last words, a slight, ironic smile appeared in the corners of his mouth and then vanished just as quickly.

A very deep, very bitter irritation filled Kreisler. He realized that the Abbot, with all the advantages of his mind and intelligence, was playing a deceptive game and that all the reasons he had earlier produced to persuade him to enter the monastery served some hidden intent just as did those that he now gave for the opposite course. Kreisler decided to leave the Abbey and to forget all the ominous secrets which, if he stayed longer, could entangle him in a web from which he would no longer be able to

escape. As he was considering how he could return immediately to Sieghartshof to Meister Abraham, how he could see *her* again, could hear *her* again who was his only thought, he felt the sweet anguish in his heart which presaged the most ardent longing.

Deep in thought, Kreisler was wandering toward the main entrance to the park, when Pater Hilarius caught up with him and began speaking at once, "You were with the Abbot, Kreisler! He told you everything! Well, was I right? We are all lost! This spiritual comedian—the word is out—we are alone! When he—you know whom I mean—came in his cowl to Rome, His Papal Holiness immediately granted him an audience. He fell on his knees and kissed the papal slipper. Refusing him the signal to rise, His Papal Holiness let him lie on the floor for a whole hour. 'That is your first churchly punishment,' said His Holiness when he finally permitted him to rise and held a long sermon about the sinful errors into which Cyprianus had fallen. Afterwards in some secret room the monk received long instructions and then left! There has not been a saint for a long time! The miracle—well, you have seen the picture, Kreisler—the miracle, I say, first received its true shape in Rome. I am nothing but an honest Benedictine monk, a valuable *praefectus chori,* which you will grant me, and I like to drink a glass of Nierensteiner or Bocksbeutel to the Church of the only true faith, but—! I am consoled by the thought that he will not stay here long. He must travel around. *Monachus in claustro non valet ova duo; sed quando est extra, bene valet triginta.*[12] He will probably perform miracles. Look, Kreisler, look! There he comes, along the path. He has seen us and knows how he must act."

Kreisler looked at the monk Cyprianus, who was coming slowly along the path with a solemn stride, his eyes staring at heaven, his hands folded, as if in the grip of a pious ecstasy.

Hilarius departed quickly, but Kreisler remained lost in contemplation of the monk, who had something strange in his face and carriage that seemed to distinguish him from all other people. A great, unusual fate leaves readable traces, and it might well be that a strange destiny had shaped the monk's appearance as it was now revealed.

In his transport, the monk was about to walk by without noticing Kreisler, who felt obliged to block the way of this strict emissary

12. "A monk in the monastery is not worth two eggs: but when he is outside, he is worth thirty."

of the Head of the Church, the hostile persecutor of music, the highest art.

He did this with the words, "Permit me, worthy sir, to offer you my thanks. Your powerful words saved me just in time from that rude wretch of a gypsy boy. He would have twisted my neck like that of a stolen chicken."

The monk seemed to awaken from a dream; he wiped his forehead with his hand and stared at Kreisler for a long time as if he had to think who this man was. Then his face became distorted by a fearful solemnity, and his eyes flashing anger, he cried in a loud voice, "Presumptuous, wicked man! You deserved to have me let you die with your sins! Are you not the man who profanes the sacred church service, the very noble support of religion, by your worldly jingles? Is it not you who deludes pious souls with foolish tricks so that they turn away from what is sacred and become enslaved by voluptuous songs in a worldly atmosphere?" Kreisler felt as insulted by these mad reproaches as amused by the foolish arrogance of the monk who was so easy to combat.

"If it is," said Kreisler very calmly, looking the monk firmly in the eye, "if it is sinful to praise the divine power in the language given us as a divine gift that can awaken in our hearts fervent reverence and the knowledge of the beyond; if it is sinful to soar on seraphic wings of song above everything earthly and to strive for the highest with piety and love, then you are right, sir, then I am a dreadful sinner. Permit me, however, to hold the opposite opinion and to believe firmly that the true glory of holy rapture would be lost from the church service if singing should cease."

"Then implore," replied the monk severely and coldly, "then implore the Holy Virgin to remove the scale from your eyes and to reveal to you your damnable error."

"A composer,"[13] said Kreisler, smiling gently, "was asked by someone how he managed to compose spiritual music that was so completely reverent. 'When,' the pious, childlike composer replied, 'I have difficulty composing, I pray several *aves* as I walk back and forth in my room and then I get ideas again.' The same master commented on a great spiritual work,[14] 'Not until I had progressed halfway through my work, did I notice that it was turning out well; never was I so pious as during the time I was working

13. Joseph Hayden [Hoffmann's note].
14. *The Creation* [Hoffmann's note].

on it; every day I dropped to my knees and implored God to grant me the strength to complete this work successfully.' It seems to me, sir, that neither this master nor Palestrina were doing anything sinful and that only a heart chilled by ascetic callousness cannot be inspired by song to the highest piety."

"Little man," the monk flared up angrily, "who are you that I should argue with you who should grovel in the dust before me? Get out of the Abbey and disturb this sacred place no longer!"

Deeply angered by the monk's imperious tone, Kreisler cried out violently, "And who are *you,* insane monk, that you presume to be superior to all humanity? Were you born without original sin? Have you never brooded over thoughts of hell? Have you never turned aside from the slippery path on which you wander? And if the Holy Virgin should mercifully snatch you from the death that you perhaps deserved for some horrible deed, then you should humbly acknowledge your sin and do penance for it, but not sacrilegiously boast of divine mercy, of the heavenly crown which you never will attain."

The monk, babbling incomprehensibly, stared at Kreisler with death and destruction in his eyes.

"And," continued Kreisler with increasing effect, "and, proud monk, when you were still wearing this coat—"

With those words, Kreisler held up before the monk the picture that he had received from Meister Abraham; but as soon as the monk saw it, he beat his forehead with his fists in wild despair and uttered a heart-rending cry of pain as if he had been struck a mortal blow.

"Away with *you,*" Kreisler cried now. "Away with *you* from the Abbey, you criminal monk! Ho ho, my saint, if you should run into the chicken thief, with whom you are in league, tell him you could not and would not protect me again; but he must watch out and keep away from my throat or else I will spear him like a lark or like his brother, for about spearing—" Kreisler became horrified of himself at this moment; the monk was standing rigidly before him, motionless, both fists still pressed to his forehead, incapable of a word or sound; and it seemed to Kreisler that something was rustling in the shrubbery, as if the wild Giuseppo would rush right out at him. He ran away from there; the monks were singing the evening prayer, and Kreisler went to the chapel, where he hoped to calm his deeply stirred and wounded soul.

The *hora* was over; the monks were leaving the choir; the lights were extinguished; Kreisler's thoughts had turned to the early pious musicians whom he had invoked in his quarrel with the monk Cyprianus. Music—pious music had filled him; Julia had sung, and the storm no longer raged in him. He was about to go through a side chapel, the doors of which led into a long corridor that led to a stairway and up to his room.

When Kreisler entered the chapel, a monk rose from the floor with effort; he had been stretched out before the miraculous picture of Mary that was placed there. In the glow of the eternal lamp, Kreisler recognized the monk Cyprianus, but he was exhausted and miserable and seemed to be just recovering from a faint. Kreisler helpfully offered him his hand. Then the monk spoke in a soft, moaning voice, "I recognize you—you are Kreisler! Have mercy, do not leave me; help me over to those steps. I wish to sit down, but sit next to me, close to me; only the Blessed Virgin must hear us. Be merciful," continued the monk, when both were sitting on the altar steps, "be merciful; tell me if you got that fatal picture from the old Severino, if you know everything about that whole terrible secret."

Freely and openly, Kreisler assured him that he had obtained the picture from Meister Abraham Liscov and told him without hesitation everything that had happened in Sieghartshof and that he had concluded from the painful memory and the fear of betrayal the painting evoked that some kind of atrocity had occurred. The monk, who seemed to be deeply moved by several parts of Kreisler's tale, was silent for some moments. Then, gaining courage, he began in a firmer voice, "You know too much, Kreisler, not to know everything. You must know, Kreisler, that Prince Hektor, who was hunting you down, is my younger brother. We are the sons of a royal father, whose throne I would have inherited if the storms of the age had not deposed him. We both entered the service, since war had just broken out, and it was this that brought first me and then my brother to Naples. At that time I had abandoned myself to all the vices of the world, and I was quite carried away by a wild passion for women. A dancer, as lovely as she was wicked, was my mistress; and I also ran after other girls whenever I could.

"Thus it happened that one day when it was already growing dark, I was chasing after a couple of creatures of this kind on the Molo. I had nearly caught up to them when directly behind me

a voice rang out harshly, 'What a dear, sweet good-for-nothing the little Prince is! There he is running after common girls when he could be lying in the arms of a Princess!' My glance fell on an old, ragged gypsy woman whom I had seen being led away along Toledo Street a few days before by the police because in a quarrel she had knocked down a water seller with her crutch, even though he seemed strong. 'What do you want with me, you old witch?' I cried to the woman, who overwhelmed me with a stream of the most revolting, horrible curse words so that idle people soon gathered around us and burst out laughing at my embarrassment. I was about to go, when the woman caught me by my clothing, although she did not get up off the ground and, suddenly breaking off her swearing, spoke softly to me, distorting her dreadful face with a leering smile. 'Well, my sweet little Prince, won't you stay with me? Don't you want to hear something about the beautiful angel child that has lost her heart to you?' Then the woman got up with effort, still holding tight to my arm, and whispered to me about a young girl that was lovely and charming as the day and still a virgin. I thought the woman was an ordinary procuress and was about to free myself from her with a few ducats, as I did not feel like getting involved in a new adventure. But she did not take the money, and as I went away she shouted after me, 'You may go away now, my fine gentleman, but you will soon seek me out in pain and sorrow!' Time passed; I had no thought any more of the gypsy woman, when one day on the road called Villa Reale, I noticed a lady walking in front of me who seemed more marvelously attractive than any I had ever seen. I hurried past her, and when I saw her face, it seemed to me that the beauty of heaven was revealed to me. At that time I thought as a sinful man, and that I repeat the wicked thought will serve you instead of a description of the charm with which the eternal power had endowed Angela, for it would not be proper for me, nor would I succeed in saying very much about earthly beauty. At her side there walked, or rather limped, a very old, nicely dressed lady who was conspicuous for her unusual height and strange clumsiness. In spite of the completely different costume, in spite of the hood which concealed a part of her face, I soon recognized the gypsy woman from the Molo in the old lady. Her leer, her slight nod showed me that I was not mistaken. I could not keep my eyes off the charming miracle; the beauty cast down her eyes; her fan slipped from her hand. I quickly

picked it up. As she took it, I touched her finger; she trembled; then the fire of my damned passions blazed up, and I did not suspect that the first minute of the terrible temptation which Heaven had imposed on me had arrived. Quite confused, quite bewildered in my mind, I stood there and scarcely noticed that the lady and her old companion were climbing into a carriage which had stopped at the end of the avenue. Not until the carriage was rolling away, did I come to my senses and dash after them like a madman; I got there just in time to see the carriage stop in front of a house in the narrow, short street that leads to the Largo delle Piane Square. The lady and her companion got out, and since the carriage drove on immediately, I rightly assumed that their home was there. My banker, Signor Alessandro Sperzi, lived in the Largo delle Piane Square; and I still do not know how it occurred to me to call on that gentleman at that moment. He thought I was coming on business and began to talk about my affairs in detail. But my head was filled only with the lady. I thought of her; I heard nothing else; and so I finally told Signor Sperzi about my charming little adventure. Signor Sperzi could tell me more about my beauty than I had been able to guess. It was he who received a considerable remittance from a bank in Augsburg for this lady. She was called Angela Benzoni, but the old lady was named Madame Magdala Sigrun. Signor Sperzi had to send a very exact report about the girl's life to the bank in Augsburg, so that he was, in a way, her guardian, as he was charged with her education and the supervision of her household. My banker thought the girl was the fruit of a secret relationship between persons of the noble class. I expressed my surprise to Signor Sperzi that such a jewel was entrusted to such a questionable woman as the old woman who wandered around the streets in dirty, ragged gypsy clothes and even tried her hand at being a procuress. My banker assured me, however, that there was no more loyal or careful nurse than the old woman, who had come here with the girl when the latter was only three years old. Disguising herself as a gypsy was merely a whim which was easy to excuse in this land of masks. I can, I must be brief! The old woman, dressed as a gypsy, sought me out and led me herself to Angela, who confessed her love to me, blushing with shame and charmingly innocent. In my confused state, I still believed that the old woman was a nourisher of sin, but I was soon convinced of the opposite. Angela was chaste and pure as snow, and where I had thought to

revel in sin, I learned to believe in a virtue that I must indeed now recognize as a hellish deception of the devil. As my passion became more intense, I inclined more and more to the old woman, who whispered constantly in my ear that I should marry Angela. If this had to be done secretly for the moment, still the day would come when I could publicly place the royal diadem on her forehead. Angela's birth was the equal of mine.

"We were married in a chapel of the Church San Filippo. I thought I had found paradise. I cut all my ties, I resigned from the service, and I was no longer seen in those circles where I had formerly reveled in sin. It was this change in my life that betrayed me. That dancer, whom I had abandoned, found out where I went every evening, and suspecting that perhaps she could get her revenge, she revealed the secret of my love to my brother. My brother crept after me and surprised me in Angela's arms. Hektor apologized for his intrusion with a jest and reproached me for being so self-centered that I had not even given him the confidence due a friend; but I saw only too clearly how struck he was by Angela's beauty. The spark had fallen; the raging flame of passion flared up in him. He came frequently, although only at those times when he knew he would find me there. I thought I noticed that Hektor's insane love was returned, and all the furies of jealousy lacerated my breast. I was in hell. Once when I entered Angela's room, I thought I heard Hektor's voice in the next room. I stood rooted to the floor, death in my heart. Suddenly Hektor dashed out of the next room, his face scarlet, his eyes rolling wildly like those of a lunatic. 'Damned man, you will not get in my way any longer!' he cried, foaming with rage; and he thrust a dagger which he had quickly drawn into my breast up to the hilt. The surgeon who was summoned found that the dagger had gone through my heart. The Blessed Virgin has honored me by granting me life again through a miracle."

The monk spoke the last words in a gentle, trembling voice and seemed lost in melancholy thought.

"And," said Kreisler, "what became of Angela?"

"When," replied the monk in a hollow, ghostly voice, "when the murderer was about to enjoy the fruits of his horrible deed, a mortal convulsion seized my beloved and she died in his arms. Poison—"

Having spoken these words, the monk fell on his face and

gasped like a dying man. Kreisler aroused the monastery by ringing the bell. Monks hurried to him and carried the unconscious Cyprianus to the infirmary.

The next morning Kreisler found the Abbot in an especially cheerful mood. "Ha, ha!" he called to him, "ha, ha, my Johannes, you would not believe in modern miracles and you, yourself, performed the most wonderful miracle possible in the chapel yesterday. Tell me, what did you do to our pious saint who is now lying there like a repentant, contrite sinner, childishly afraid and humbly begging us all for forgiveness for having wished to be so superior to us? Did you make him confess, perhaps, when he demanded your confession?"

Kreisler saw no reason for concealing anything that had transpired between himself and the monk Cyprianus. Therefore he told the Abbot in detail everything, from the frank lecture he had given the presumptuous monk when he had sneered at the holy art of music, to the terrible state into which he lapsed when he spoke the word "poison." Then Kreisler explained that he still really did not know why the picture had had the same effect on the monk Cyprianus as on Prince Hektor. Likewise he was still in the dark about the way Meister Abraham was involved in those horrible events.

"Indeed," said the Abbot, smiling happily, "indeed, my dear son Johannes, our relationship is quite different from what it was a few hours ago. A courageous spirit, a steady mind, especially a deep, true feeling that is hidden in man's breast like a wonderful prophetic knowledge, accomplishes more than the sharpest intelligence, the most practiced, penetrating vision. You have proved this, my Johannes, by skillfully using at the right moment the weapon put in your hand without any explanation of its secret; and you defeated the enemy whom the best thought-out plan would not have easily driven from the field. Without knowing it, you have done me, the monastery, perhaps even the Church, a service, the beneficial results of which cannot be estimated. I wish to, I must, now be quite honest with you. I am turning away from those who were telling me false things to your disadvantage; you can count on me, Johannes! Let me arrange that the dearest wish in your heart is fulfilled. Your Cecilia, you know which charming creature I mean—but no more of that for the moment!—I can tell you in a few words what you still wish to know about those terrible events in Naples. First of all, our worthy Brother Cyprianus chose to skip

one little circumstance. Angela died of the poison that he gave her in his insane jealousy. Meister Abraham was living in Naples at that time under the name of Severino. He hoped to trace his lost Chiara and actually did find her when that old gypsy woman, called Magdala Sigrun, whom you already know, crossed his path. The old woman turned to the Meister when that terrible event occurred, and before she left Naples entrusted to him that picture whose secrets you still do not know. If you press the metal button on the frame, then Antonio's picture, which only serves as a cover to a box, springs up; and you will see not only Angela's picture, but a couple of papers will come into your hands that are of the utmost importance, as they furnish you with proof of the double murder. You see now why your talisman was so effective. Meister Abraham supposedly had many other contacts with the brothers, but he can tell you about them better than I. Let us now find out, Johannes, how Brother Cyprianus is feeling!"

"And the miracle?" asked Kreisler as he cast his glance at the place on the wall above the little altar where he and the Abbot had placed the picture, as the gentle reader probably remembers. He was not a little surprised to see Leonardo da Vinci's *Holy Family* in its place again instead of that picture. "And the miracle?" asked Kreisler for the second time.

"You mean," replied the Abbot with a strange look, "you mean the beautiful picture that used to hang here? I have put it in the infirmary for the moment. Perhaps the sight of it will strengthen our poor Brother Cyprianus, perhaps the Blessed Virgin will help him for a second time."

Kreisler found in his room a letter from Meister Abraham.

My Johannes!

Away! Away! Leave the Abbey; hurry here as fast as you can! The Devil has started a quite special hunt for his own amusement! More when I see you. Writing is difficult for me, for everything sticks in my throat and threatens to choke me. About me, about my star of hope that is rising, not a word. Only so much in all haste. You will not find the Rätin Benzon here any more, but her Imperial Countess von Eschenau. The patent of nobility has arrived from Vienna, and the imminent marriage of Julia with the worthy Prince Ignatius is as good as announced. Fürst Irenäus is occupied with thoughts of the new throne on which he will sit as ruler. Ben-

zon, or rather the Countess vón Eschenau, has promised him that. Prince Hektor, meanwhile, has been playing hide-and-seek, but now he must really away to the army. He will return soon, and then a double wedding will be celebrated. It will be gay. The trumpet players are already clearing their throats, the violinists are waxing their bows, the chandlers in Sieghartsweiler are busy preparing the torches—but—! Next of all comes the Fürstin's name day; I am planning something tremendous, but you must be here. Come just as soon as you have read this! Run as fast as you can. I will see you very soon. Apropos! Look out for the priests, but I love the Abbot very much. Adieu!

This little letter of the old Meister was so brief and informative that—

Editor's Postscript

At the end of the second volume, the editor is compelled to share a very sad bit of information with the gentle reader. Bitter death has snatched away the clever, educated, philosophical, poetical Kater Murr in the middle of his beautiful career. He departed this life on the night of the twenty-ninth to thirtieth of November after brief but painful suffering with the composure and calm of a wise man. So there is another proof that precocious geniuses have trouble: they either become anticlimatically mediocre in character and mind and get lost in the crowd or they die young. Poor Murr! The death of your friend Muzius was the harbinger of your own; and if I should make a funeral oration, it would come from my heart, quite unlike the one that came from that apathetic Hinzmann; for I loved you, and more than I did many—so! Sleep well! Peace to your ashes!

It is unfortunate that the deceased did not finish his life and opinions which must, accordingly, remain a fragment. However, among the posthumous papers of the immortal cat there are many reflections and comments which he seems to have written down during the time when he was living with Kapellmeister Kreisler. In addition, there is still a large part of the book that the cat tore up which contains Kreisler's biography.

The editor finds, therefore, that it would not be inappropriate if he should share with the gentle reader what exists of Kreisler's

The postscript, of course, is Hoffmann's.

biography in a third volume that will appear at Easter, and he will insert at appropriate places those comments and reflections of the tomcat that seem worth communicating.[1]

1. There is no third volume. Whether or not Hoffmann intended to write one is moot. Surely *Kater Murr* is complete as it stands.

Chronological List of Hoffmann's Literary Works

1814 *Fantasy Pieces in the Style of Callot*[1] *(Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier),* vol. 1

Preface by Jean Paul
Jacques Callot
Ritter Gluck [first published in 1809]
Kreisleriana

1. The Musical Agonies of the Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler (Johannes Kreislers, des Kapellmeisters, musikalische Leiden)
2. Ombra adorata!
3. Thoughts on the Sublime Value of Music (Gedanken über den hohen Wert der Musik)
4. Beethoven's Instrumental Music (Beethovens Instrumental-Musik) [first published anonymously, 1810–13]
5. Highly Diffuse Thoughts (Höchst zerstreute Gedanken) [first published in 1814, signed "Kapellmeister J. Kreisler"]
6. The Consummate Craftsman (Der vollkommene Maschinist)

Don Juan [first published anonymously in 1813]

Fantasy Pieces in the Style of Callot, vol. 2

An Account of the Latest Fortunes of the Dog Berganza (Nachricht von den neuesten Schicksalen des Hundes Berganza)
The Mesmerist (Der Magnetiseur)

1. The four volumes of *Fantasy Pieces* constitute the first collection of tales.

Fantasy Pieces in the Style of Callot, vol. 3

The Golden Pot: A Modern Fairytale (Der Goldne Topf: Ein Märchen aus der neuen Zeit)

1815 *Fantasy Pieces in the Style of Callot,* vol. 4

A New Year's Eve Adventure (Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht)

Editor's [Hoffmann's] Preface

1. The Beloved (Die Geliebte)
2. The Tavern Group (Die Gesellschaft im Keller)
3. Apparitions (Erscheinungen)
4. The Story of the Lost Reflection; Postscript by the Traveling Enthusiast (Die Geschichte vom verlornen Spiegelbilde; Postskript des reisenden Enthusiasten)

Kreisleriana [including, as an insert, act 1 of *Prinzessin Blandina*]

1. Baron Wallborn's Letter to Kapellmeister Kreisler (Brief des Barons Wallborn an den Kapellmeister Kreisler) [first published in 1814, Preface by Fouqué and Hoffmann]
2. Kapellmeister Kreisler's Letter to Baron Wallborn (Brief des Kapellmeisters Kreisler an den Baron Wallborn)
3. Kreisler's Musical-Poetical Club (Kreislers musikalisch-poetischer Klub)
4. An Account of an Educated Young Man (Nachricht von einem gebildeten jungen Mann) [first published in 1814]
5. The Music Hater (Der Musikfeind) [first published anonymously, 1814]
6. Concerning a Statement by Sacchini and the Alleged Power in Music (Über einen Ausspruch Sacchinis, und über den sogenannten Effeckt in der Musik)
7. A Letter of Achievement for Johannes Kreisler (Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief) [first published in 1814]

The Devil's Elixirs (Die Elixiere Des Teufels), vol. 1

1816 *The Devil's Elixirs,* vol. 2

Night Pieces (Nachtstücke),[2] part 1.

The Sandman (Der Sandmann)
Ignaz Denner
The Jesuit Church in G (Die Jesuiterkirche in G)
Sanctus

1817 *Night Pieces,* part 2.

The Deserted House (Das öde Haus)

2. The two parts of *Night Pieces* constitute the second collection of tales.

The Deed of Entail (Das Majorat)
The Vow (Das Gelübde)
The Heart of Stone (Das steinerne Herz)

1819 *The Serapion Brethren*[3] *(Die Serapions-Brüder),* vol. 1.

Section One (frame tale)
1. The Hermit Serapion (Der Einsiedler Serapion) [first published anonymously in January 1819]
2. Councillor Krespel (Rat Krespel) [first published in 1818]
3. The Fermate (Die Fermate) [first published in 1816]
4. The Poet and the Composer (Der Dichter und der Komponist) [first published anonymously in 1813]

Section Two (frame tale)
1. A Fragment from the Lives of Three Friends (Ein Fragment aus dem Leben dreier Freunde) [first published in 1817]
2. Artus Hall (Der Artushof) [first published in 1817]
3. The Mines of Falun (Die Bergwerke zu Falun)
4. The Nutcracker and the Mouse King (Nussknacker und Mausekönig) [first published in 1816]

The Serapian Brethren, vol. 2

Section Three (frame tale)
1. The Singers' Contest (Der Kampf der Sänger)
2. A Ghost Story (Eine Spukgeschichte)
3. The Automatons (Die Automate) [first published in 1817]
4. Doge and Dogaresse

Section Four (frame tale)
1. Ancient and Modern Church Music (Alte und neue Kirchenmusik)
2. Master Martin the Cooper and His Journeymen (Meister Martin der Küfner und seine Gesellen)
3. The Alien Child (Das fremde Kind)

"The Extraordinary Agonies of a Producer" ("Seltsame Leiden eines Theater-Direktors")

"Haimatochare"

"Little Zaches" (Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober)

Fantasy Pieces in the Style of Callot, revised edition

1820 *The Serapion Brethren,* vol. 3

Section Five (frame tale)
1. An Account from the Life of a Renowned Man (Nach-

3. The four volumes of the *Serapion Brethren* constitute the third collection of tales. The tales in this collection were not named by Hoffmann, but the titles used have become traditional for these works imbedded in the frame.

richt aus dem Leben eines bekannten Mannes) [first published in 1819]
2. Bridal Choice (Die Brautwahl)
3. The Mysterious Guest (Der unheimliche Gast) [first published in 1819]

Section Six (frame tale)
1. Mademoiselle de Scudéri (Das Fräulein von Scuderi)
2. Gambler's Luck (Spielerglück)
3. Baron von B.

The Life and Opinions of Kater Murr, With the Fragmentary Biography of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler on Random Sheets of Scrap Paper, vol. 1. *(Lebens-Ansichten des Katers Murr nebst fragmentarischer Biographie des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler in zufälligen Makulaturblättern)*

Princess Brambilla: a Caprice in the Manner of Jakob Callot (Ein Capriccio nach Jakob Callot)

1821 *The Serapion Brethren,* vol. 4

Section Seven (frame tale)
1. Signor Formica [first published in 1820]
2. Zacharias Werner
3. Apparitions (Erscheinungen) [first published in 1817]

Section Eight (frame tale)
1. The Interdependence of Things (Der Zusammenhang der Dinge [first published in 1820]
2. Vampirism (Vampirismus)
3. The Esthetic Tea Circle (Die ästhetische Teegesellschaft)
4. The King's Betrothed (Die Königsbraut)

The Life and Opinions of Kater Murr, vol. 2

"La Marquise de la Pivardière" (Die Marquise de la Pivardière)

"Erroneous Notions. Fragment from the Life of a Fantasist" ("Die Irrungen. Fragment aus dem Leben eines Fantasten")

1822 "The Secrets. A Continuation of the Fragment from the Life of a Fantasist: Erroneous Notions" ("Die Geheimnisse. Fortsetzung des Fragments aus dem Leben eines Fantasten: Die Irrungen")

"The Nature Spirit" ("Der Elementargeist")

"The Robbers" ("Die Räuber")

"The Doubles" ("Die Doppeltgänger")

"My Cousin's Corner Window" ("Des Vetters Eckfenster")

"The Recovery" ("Die Genesung")

"Master Flea" ("Meister Floh")

1823 "Master Johannes Wacht" ("Meister Johannes Wacht")

1824 "The Enemy" ("Der Feind") [never completed; Hoffmann died while dictating this story, 25 June 1822]

1825 *The Last Tales*[4] *(Die Letzten Erzählungen),* vol. 1
Haimatochare
La Marquise de la Privardière
Erroneous Notions (Die Irrungen)
The Secrets (Die Geheimnisse)
The Nature Spirit (Der Elementargeist)
The Robbers (Die Räuber)
The Last Tales, vol. 2
The Doubles (Die Doppeltgänger)
Datura fastuosa
Meister Johannes Wacht
My Cousin's Corner Window (Des Vetters Eckfenster)
The Recovery (Die Genesung)
several fragments

For editions of Hoffmann's letters, diaries, musical compositions, and art work see Select Bibliography, pp. 353.

4. The two volumes of the *Last Tales* constitute the fourth collection of tales. All of these tales, however, with the exception of the fragments in volume 2, were previously published.

Select Bibliography

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Salomon, Gerhard. *E. T. A. Hoffmann: Bibliographie.* 2d rev. ed. Berlin, 1927. Reprint, Hildesheim, 1963. This bibliography extends only through 1871.

Voerster, Jürgen. *160 Jahre E. T. A. Hoffmann-Forschung. 1805–1965.* Stuttgart, 1967. This is the most recent bibliography.

GERMAN EDITIONS OF HOFFMANN'S WORKS

Collected Literary Works

Ellinger, George von, ed. *Werke.* Rev. ed. 8 vols. Berlin, 1927.

Erné, Nino, ed. *Gesammelte Werke.* Hamburg, 1964–.

Harich, Walter, ed. *Dichtungen und Schriften sowie Briefe und Tagebücher.* 15 vols. Weimar, 1924.

Hirschberg, L., ed. *Sämtliche Werke.* 14 vols. Berlin, 1922.

Kanzog, K., ed. *Poetische Werke.* 12 vols. Berlin, 1956.

Maassen, George von, ed. *Werke.* Vols. 1–4, 6–10 (incomplete). München-Leipzig, 1908–28.

Müller-Seidel, Walter, ed. *Gesammelte Werke.* 5 vols. (vol. 3 ed. Friedrich Schnapp). München, 1960–63.

Seidel, Gerhard, ed. *Poetische Werke.* 6 vols. Berlin, 1963.

Spiekerkotter, Gisela, ed. *Werke.* 5 vols. Zürich, 1965.

Editions of Other Works by Hoffmann

Hitzig, Julius E. *Aus Hoffmanns Leben und Nachlass.* 2 vols. Berlin, 1823. Supplementary material published with *Die letzten Erzählungen* (Berlin, 1825); enlarged and revised edition published with the *Erzählende Schriften in einer Auswahl* (Stuttgart, 1831); further revision with the *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Stuttgart, 1839).

Müller, Hans von, ed. *E. T. A. Hoffmann im persönlichen und brieflichen Verkehr. Sein Briefwechsel und die Erinnerungen seiner Bekannten.* 2 vols. Berlin, 1912.

———. *E. T. A. Hoffmanns Tagebücher und literarische Entwürfe.* Berlin, 1915.

Schnapp, Friedrich, ed. *E. T. A. Hoffmanns Briefwechsel.* 2 vols. München, 1967.

Steffen, Walter, and Müller, Hans von, eds. *Die Handzeichnungen E. T. A. Hoffmanns.* Berlin, 1926.

There is no complete edition of Hoffmann's musical works. For a bibliography of these works see Hans Ehinger, *E. T. A. Hoffmann als Musiker und Musikschriftsteller* (Olten, 1954), pp. 214–21. Some of the musical works can be found in Gustav Becking, ed. *E. T. A. Hoffmanns-Musikalische Werke* (Leipzig, 1927); and in Hans von Müller, ed., *Das Kreislerbuch* (Leipzig, 1903).

RECENT EDITIONS IN ENGLISH

Bleiler, E. F., ed. *The Best Tales of Hoffmann.* Translated by various hands. New York, 1967. "The Golden Flower Pot," "Automata," "A New Year's Eve Adventure," "Nutcracker and the King of Mice," "The Sand-Man," "Rath Krespel, Tobias Martin, Master Cooper, and His Men," "The Mines of Falun," "Signor Formica," "The King's Betrothed."

Bullock, Michael, ed. and trans. *The Tales of Hoffmann.* New York, 1963. "The Sandman," "Mademoiselle de Scudéry," "Datura Fastuosa," "The King's Bride," "Gambler's Luck."

Cohen, J. M., ed. and trans. *Eight Tales of Hoffmann.* London,

1952. "The Lost Reflection," "The Sandman," "The Jesuit Church in Glogau," "The Deserted House," "Councillor Krespel," "The Mines of Falun," "A Ghost Story," "Gambler's Luck."

Lazare, Christopher, ed. *Tales of Hoffmann.* Translated by various hands. New York, 1959. "Mademoiselle de Scudéry," "Don Juan," "Antonia's Song," "The Golden Pot," "The Doubles," "The Vow," "The Fermata," "Berthold the Madman," "Salvator Rosa," "The Legacy."

Taylor, Ronald, trans. *The Devil's Elixirs.* London, 1963.

For a complete list covering Hoffmann in English up to 1956, see the indispensable work by B. Q. Morgan, *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation: 1481–1927,* and the *Supplement: 1928–1955* (New York, 1965).

Old translations of Hoffmann into English (sometimes collected in such volumes as *Hoffmann's Strange Stories,* 1855, and *Weird Tales,* 1885) tend to be mediocre at best, subversive at worst. Occasionally there is a good nineteenth-century translation of one of Hoffmann's pieces; but in general, the quality is poor. Despite Thomas Carlyle's frequent errors, there is very much to recommend his translation of *The Golden Pot,* 1851; but J. T. Bealby's version of "The Sandman," 1884 (which appears in Mr. Bleiler's 1967 edition of Hoffmann) is hardly worth preserving.

The recent translations done by Cohen and Bullock are of high quality. So too is Taylor's rendering of *The Devil's Elixirs.*

WORKS ABOUT HOFFMANN

Books

Ament, Wilhelm. *E. T. A. Hoffmann in Bamberg.* Bamberg, 1951.

Arndt, Ernst Moritz. *Reise durch Schweden im Jahre 1804.* 2 vols. Berlin, 1806. For sources of "The Mines of Falun."

Bartels, Ernst Daniel August. *Grundzüge einer Physiologie und Physik des Magnetismus.* Frankfurt, 1812. For sources of *The Serapion Brethren.*

Barthel, Karl Werner. *"Das Fräulein von Scuderi" und ihre Bühnenschicksale:* Greifswald, 1929.

Baumgart, F. "Hoffmanns Künstlernovellen." In *Festschrift für W. Waetzoldt*. Bamberg, 1940.

Benz, Richard. *Die deutsche Romantik*. Stuttgart, 1956.

———. "E. T. A. Hoffmann." In *Die Welt der Dichter*. Berlin, 1949.

Bergengruen, Werner. *E. T. A. Hoffmann*. Zürich, 1960.

Binger, Norman H. "Verbal Irony in the Works of Hoffmann." Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1952.

Bollnow, O. F. "*Der goldne Topf* und die Naturphilosophie der Romantik." In *Unruhe und Geborgenheit im Weltbild neuer Dichter*. Stuttgart, 1953.

Borcherdt, Hans Heinrich. "E. T. A. Hoffmanns *Kater Murr*." In *Der Roman der Goethezeit*. Stuttgart, 1949.

Buchmann, R. *Helden und Mächte des romantischen Künstmarchens*. Leipzig, 1910.

Cobb, Palmer. *The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of E. A. Poe*. Chapel Hill, 1908.

Cramer, Thomas. *Das Groteske bei E. T. A. Hoffmann*. München, 1966.

Egli, G. *Hoffmann. Ewigkeit und Endlichkeit in seinem Werk*. Zurich, 1927.

Ehinger, Hans. *E. T. A. Hoffmann als Musiker und Musikschriftsteller*. Olten, 1954.

Ellinger, Georg. *Hoffmann, sein Leben und seine Werke*. Hamburg-Leipzig, 1894.

Freud, Sigmund. "Das Unheimliche." In *Gesammelte Schriften*. Vol. 10. Wien, 1924.

Funck, Z. (C. F. Kunz). *Aus dem Leben zweier Dichter*. Vol. 1. Berlin, 1836.

Funk, Eva. "E. T. A. Hoffmann und das Theater." Dissertation, Universität von Wien, 1957.

Gerber, Ernst Ludwig. *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Ton-Künstler*. Leipzig, 1814. For sources of "Councillor Krespel."

Gloor, Arthur. *E. T. A. Hoffmann. Der Dichter der entwurzelten Geistigkeit.* Zürich, 1947.

Gorlin, Michael. *N. V. Gogol and E. T. A. Hoffmann.* Leipzig, 1933.

Greef, Paul. *E. T. A. Hoffmann als Musiker und Musikschriftsteller.* Köln, 1948.

Harich, Walther. *E. T. A. Hoffmann. Das Leben eines Künstlers.* 2 vols. Berlin, 1922.

——— *Das Leben E. T. A. Hoffmanns aus Briefen, Tagebüchern und d. autobiographischen Stellen S. Schriften.* Berlin, 1926.

Heilborn, Ernst. *E. T. A. Hoffmann, der Künstler und die Kunst.* Berlin, 1926.

Hewett-Thayer, Harvey. *Hoffmann: Author of the Tales.* Princeton, 1948.

Jaffe, Aniela. "Bilder und Symbole aus E. T. A. Hoffmanns Märchen *Der goldne Topf.*" In C. G. Jung, ed., *Gestaltung d. Unbewussten.* Zürich, 1950.

Jost, Walter. *Von Ludwig Tieck zu E. T. A. Hoffmann.* Frankfurt, 1921.

Katz, Moritz. *Die Schilderungen des musikalischen Eindrucks bei Schumann, Hoffmann und Tieck.* Giessen, 1910.

Kayser, Wolfgang. *Das Groteske in Malerei und Dichtung.* Hamburg, 1960. In English as *The Grotesque in Art and Literature,* trans. Ulrich Weisstein (New York, 1963).

Kent, Leonard J. *The Subconscious in Gogol' and Dostoevskij, and its Antecedents.* The Hague, 1969.

Klinke, Otto. *E. T. A. Hoffmanns Leben und Werke.* Halle, 1903.

Köhn, Lothar. *Vieldeutige Welt; Studien zur Struktur der Erzählungen E. T. A. Hoffmanns und zur Entwicklung seines Werkes.* Tübingen, 1966.

Köppler, Rudolf. *E. T. A. Hoffmann am Bamberger Theater.* Bamberg, 1929.

Kroll, Erwin. *E. T. A. Hoffmann, Leben und Werk.* Leipzig, 1923.

Leppmann, Franz. *Kater Murr und seine Sippe.* München, 1908.

Lukács, Georg. *Fortschritt und Reaktion in der deutschen Literatur.* Berlin, 1947.

Maassen, Carl Georg von. "Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann." In *Die grossen Deutschen,* Vol. 3. Berlin, 1936.

———. *Der grundgescheute Antiquarius,* Vol. 2. München, 1923. Twelve articles on Hoffmann.

Mausolf, W. *E. T. A. Hoffmanns Stellung zu Drama und Theater.* Berlin, 1920.

Mayer, Hans. "Die Wirklichkeit E. T. A. Hoffmanns." In *Von Lessing bis Thomas Mann.* Pfullingen, 1959.

Merkel, F. *Der Naturphilosoph von Schubert und die deutsche Romantik.* München, 1913.

Meyer, Friedrich Johann Lorenz. *Briefe aus der Hauptstadt und dem Innern Frankreichs unter der Consular-Regierung.* Stuttgart, 1803. For sources of "Mademoiselle de Scudéri."

Meyer, Hermann. "E. T. A. Hoffmanns *Lebenansichten des Katers Murr.*" In *Das Zitat in der Erzählkunst.* Stuttgart, 1961.

———. "Der Sonderling als Ausdrucksform des romantischen Subjektivismus." In *Der Sonderling in der deutschen Dichtung.* München, 1963.

Mistler, J. *Hoffmann le fantastique.* Paris, 1927.

Mollenauer, Robert Russell. "Three 'Spätromantiker' on Romanticism. Hoffmann, Heine and Eichendorff." Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1960.

Müller, Hans von. *Die erste Liebe des Ernst Theodor Hoffmann.* Heidelberg, 1955.

———. *E. T. A. Hoffmann in Dresden und Leipzig.* Leipzig, 1905.

———. *E. T. A. Hoffmann und sein Leihbibliothekar.* Leipzig, 1904.

———. *Das Kreislerbuch; Texte, Kompositionen und Bilder von E. T. A. Hoffmann.* Berlin, 1903.

———. *Das künstlerische Schaffen E. T. A. Hoffmanns.* Leipzig, 1926.

———. *Materialien zu einer Biographie E. T. A. Hoffmanns.* Berlin, 1903.

———. *Neues über E. T. A. Hoffmann.* Berlin, 1901.

Müller, Helmut. *Untersuchungen zum Problem der Formelhaftigkeit bei E. T. A. Hoffmann.* Berlin, 1964.

Negus, Kenneth. *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Other World.* Philadelphia, 1965.

———. "The Thematic Structure in Three Major Works of E. T. A. Hoffmann." Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1958.

Ochsner, Karl. *Hoffmann als Dichter des Unbewussten.* Frauenfeld, 1936.

Passage, Charles E. *The Russian Hoffmannists.* The Hague, 1963.
———. *Dostoevski the Adapter.* Chapel Hill, 1954.

Piana, Theo. *E. T. A. Hoffmann als bildender Künstler.* Berlin, 1954.

Pfitzner, Hans. "E. T. A. Hoffmanns *Undine.*" In *Vom musikalischen Drama,* Vol. 2. München, 1920.

Preisendanz, Wolfgang. *Humor als dichterische Einbildungskraft. Studien zur Erzählkunst des poetischen Realismus.* München, 1963.

Raydt, Olga. *Das Dämonische als Stilform in den literarischen Werken E. T. A. Hoffmanns.* München, 1912.

Reber, Natalie. *Studien zum Motiv des Doppelgängers bei Dostojevsky und E. T. A. Hoffmann.* Giessen, 1964.

Reimann, Olga. *Das Märchen bei E. T. A. Hoffmann.* München, 1926.

Ricci, J. F. A. *E. T. A. Hoffmann. L'homme et l'oeuvre.* Paris, 1947.

Roehl, Martin. *Die Doppelpersönlichkeit bei E. T. A. Hoffmann.* Rostock, 1918.

Schaeffer, Carl. *Die Bedeutung des Musikalischen und Akustischen in E. T. A. Hoffmanns literarischem Schaffen.* Marburg, 1909.

Schaukal, Richard von. *E. T. A. Hoffmann. Sein Werk aus seinem Leben dargestellt.* Zürich, 1923.

Schenck, E. von. *E. T. A. Hoffmann, ein Kampf um das Bild des Menschen.* Berlin, 1939.

Schollenheber, Wilhelm. *E. T. A. Hoffmanns Persönlichkeit.* München, 1922.

Schoolfield, George C. *The Figure of the Musician in German Literature.* Chapel Hill, 1956.

Schubert, Gotthilf Heinrich. *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaften.* Dresden, 1818.

———. *Die Symbolik des Traumes.* Leipzig, 1840.

Singer, Herbert. "Hoffmann. *Kater Murr.*" In *Der deutsche Roman,* ed. Benno von Wiese, Vol. 1. Düsseldorf, 1965.

Sucher, Paul. *Les sources du merveilleux chez E. T. A. Hoffmann.* Paris, 1912.

Taylor, Ronald. *Hoffmann.* London, 1963.

Teichmann, Elizabeth. *La fortune d'Hoffmann en France.* Geneva, 1961.

Thalmann, Marianne. *Das Märchen und die Moderne. Zum Begriff der Surrealität im Märchen der Romantik.* Stuttgart, 1961.

———. "Meisterschaft. Eine Studie E. T. A. Hoffmanns Genieproblem." In *Der Gesichtskreis. Joseph Drechsel zum 60. Geburtstag.* München, 1956.

———. *Der Trivialroman des 18. Jhs. und der romantische Roman.* Berlin, 1923.

Todsen, Hermann. *Über die Entwicklung des romantischen Kunstmärchens.* München, 1906.

Uhrig, Dieter. *E. T. A. Hoffmann. Sein Leben in Bildern.* Leipzig, 1961.

Werner, H. G. *E. T. A. Hoffmann. Darstellung und Deutung der Wirklichkeit im dichterischen Werk.* Weimar, 1962.

Wiese, Benno von. "E. T. A. Hoffmann. 'Rat Krespel.'" In *Die*

deutsche Novelle von Göethe bis Kafka. Vol. 2. Düsseldorf, 1962.

Willimczik, Kurt. *E. T. A. Hoffmann. Die drei Reiche seiner Gestaltenwelt.* Berlin, 1939.

Wirz, Jacques. *Die Gestalt des Künstlers bei E. T. A. Hoffmann.* Lörrach, 1961.

Wittkop-Ménardeau, Gabrielle. *E. T. A. Hoffmann in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten.* Hamburg, 1966.

Wolzogen, Hans von. *E. T. A. Hoffmann und Richard Wagner. Harmonien und Parallelen.* Berlin, 1906.

Wuhrl, Paul-Wolfgang. *Die poetische Wirklichkeit in E. T. A. Hoffmanns Kunstmärchen.* München, 1963.

Zylstra, Henry. "E. T. A. Hoffmann in England and America." Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1940.

Articles

"Aspects of E. T. A. Hoffmann." *Times Literary Supplement* 4 (1952).

Becker-Glauch, Wulf. "E. T. A. Hoffmann in russischer Literatur und sein Verhältnis zu den russischen Serapionsbrüdern." *Mitteilungen der E. T. A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft* 9 (1926): 41–54.

Bruning, Peter. "E. T. A. Hoffmann and the Philistine." *German Quarterly* January (1955): 111–21.

Fife, Robert Herndon. "Jean Paul Friedrich Richter and E. T. A. Hoffmann." *PMLA* 22 (1907): 1–32.

Gudde, Erwin. "E. T. A. Hoffmann's Reception in England," *PMLA* 16 (1926): 1005–10.

Hallamore, Gertrude Joyce. "Das Problem des Zwiespalts in den Künstlernovellen E. T. A. Hoffmanns und Thomas Manns." *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht* 36 (1944): 82–94.

Hewett-Thayer, Harvey. "Hoffmann's Approach to Literature." *Germanic Review* 15 (1940).

———. "Hoffmann's Conception of the Romantic." *Germanic Review* 14 (1939).

Himmel, Hellmuth. "Schuld und Sühne der Scuderi." *Mitteilungen der E. T. A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft* 7 (1960): 1–15.

Hoffmann, Ernst Fedor. "Zu E. T. A. Hoffmanns *Sandmann.*" *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht* 54 (1962): 244–52.

Kanzog, Klaus. "E. T. A. Hoffmanns Erzählung *Das Fräulein von Scuderi* als Kriminalgeschichte." *Mitteilungen der E. T. A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft* 11 (1964): 1–11.

———. "Grundzüge der E. T. A. Hoffmann-Forschung seit 1945. Mit einer Bibliographie." *Mitteilungen der E. T. A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft* 9 (1962): 1–30.

Loeb, Ernst. "Bedeutungswandel der Metamorphose bei Franz Kafka und E. T. A. Hoffmann. Ein Vergleich." *German Quarterly,* 35 (1962): 47–59.

Loevenich, Heinz. "Einheit und Symbolik des *Kater Murr.*" *Deutschunterricht* 16 (1964): 72–86.

Maassen, Carl Georg von. "E. T. A. Hoffmann im Urteil zeitgenössischer Dichter." *Mitteilingen der E. T. A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft* 2 (1941–43): 36–40.

Martini, Fritz. "Die Märchendichtung E. T. A. Hoffmanns." *Deutschunterricht* 7 (1955): 56–78.

Mollenauer, Robert. "The Three Periods of E. T. A. Hoffmann's Romanticism: An Attempt at Definition." *Studies in Romanticism* 11 (1963): 213–43.

Mühlher, Robert. "Leitmotiv und dialektischer Mythos in E. T. A. Hoffmanns Märchen *Der goldne Topf.*" *Mitteilungen der E. T. A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft* 1 (1940): 65–96.

———. "Liebestod und Spiegelmythe in Hoffmanns Märchen *Der Goldne Topf.*" *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 67 (1942): 21–56.

Negus, Kenneth. "The Allusions to Schiller's *Der Geisterseher* in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Das Majorat:* Meaning and Background." *German Quarterly* 32 (1959): 341–55.

———. "E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Der goldne Topf:* Its Romantic Myth." *Germanic Review* 34 (1959): 262–75.

———. "The Family Tree in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Die Elixiere des Teufels.*" *PMLA* 75 (1958): 516–20.

———. "Thematic Structure in Three Major Works of E. T. A. Hoffmann." *German Quarterly* 32 (1959): 82–190.

Neumann, A. R. "Musician or Author? E. T. A. Hoffmann's Decision." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 52 (1953): 174–81.

Nock, Francis J. "E. T. A. Hoffmann and Nonsense." *German Quarterly* 35 (1962): 60–70.

———. "E. T. A. Hoffmann and Shakespeare." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 53 (1954): 368–82.

———. "Notes on E. T. A. Hoffmann's Linguistic Usage." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 55 (1956): 588–603.

Pfeiffer-Belli, W. "Mythos und Religion bei E. T. A. Hoffmann." *Euphorion* 34 (1939): 305–40.

Porterfield, Allen W. "E. T. A. Hoffmann as a Lyric Writer." *Modern Language Quarterly* 2 (1941): 43–58.

Schnapp, Friedrich. "Der Seraphinenorden und die Serapionsbrüder E. T. A. Hoffmanns." *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 3 (1962) : 99–112.

Scott, Walter. "On the Supernatural in Fictitious Compositions; and Particularly in the Works of Ernest Theodore William Hoffmann." *Foreign Quarterly Review* 1, no. 1 (1827).

Thalmann, Marianne. "E. T. A. Hoffmanns *Fräulein von Scuderi.*" *Monatshefte* 41 (1949): 107–16.

———. "E. T. A. Hoffmanns Wirklichkeitsmärchen." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 51 (1952): 473–91.

Viebrock, Helmut. "The Knocker: Physiognomical Aspects of a Motif in Hoffmann and Dickens." *English Studies* 43 (1962): 396–402.

Wellek, René. "German and English Romanticism. A Confrontation." *Studies in Romanticism* 4, no. 1 (1964): 35–56.